



# Academic Planning and Policy APP E-NEWS

P-16 Initiatives | Planning and Accountability | Workforce, Academic Affairs and Research  
Office of Academic Planning and Policy | David W. Gardner, Deputy Commissioner

Volume 6, Number 1

January – March 2014

The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board is guided by the state's higher education plan, *Closing the Gaps by 2015*, to close the educational gaps in student participation, student success, institutional excellence, and research.



Opening panel discussion – Dr. Carol Geary, Katherine Mangan, and Dr. Mark Schneider

## Symposium Examines Purposes of 21<sup>st</sup> Century Higher Ed

The Higher Education Policy Institute (HEPI), under the leadership of the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB), hosted the symposium “The Purposes of Higher Education in the 21st Century” in February at the AT&T Executive Education and Conference Center in Austin, Texas. Sponsored by Houston Endowment, the event was the first of two symposia planned by HEPI in the series “Framing the Future of Higher Education.”

This first symposium on the purposes of higher education drew 120 attendees, including administrators, faculty, and students from universities, community colleges, and technical colleges; legislators and their staff; policy makers; and other higher education stakeholders. Attendees represented regions from all across Texas and also came from Virginia, Florida, North Carolina, Maine, and Washington, D.C. to lend a statewide and national perspective to discussions.

The Commissioner of Higher Education, Raymund Paredes, welcomed attendees. A panel followed and featured presentations by Dr. Carol Geary Schneider, President, Association of American Colleges & Universities, and Dr. Mark Schneider, Vice President and Institute Fellow, American Institutes for Research. Katherine Mangan, Senior Reporter for *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, moderated the panel's discussion.

Dr. Eduardo Padrón, President, Miami Dade College, gave the first keynote address and offered the purposes of higher education from the perspective of a

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### Upcoming Meetings

**Next Quarterly Board Meeting:**  
Thursday, April 24, 2014  
8:30 a.m.

See all upcoming meetings:  
[THECB Events](#)

### Links to Useful Sites

- [2014 Higher Education Almanac](#)
- [Compare College TX](#)
- [2013 State of Higher Ed Address](#)
- [Accountability System](#)
- [Higher Education Data](#)
- [Finance and Resource Planning](#)
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### Committee Begins Deliberations on Next Long-Range Higher Ed Plan for Texas

The newly appointed Higher Education Strategic Planning Committee held its first meeting on March 3 at the offices of the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) in Austin. Prior to the meeting, the THECB reviewed, selected, and appointed nominated members to serve on the Committee to ensure statewide coverage and representation of all higher education stakeholders. The selected members bring decades of experience, as well as ideas from successful business organizations and distinguished higher education institutions to the planning process. For detailed information about each Committee member, visit the website <http://www.thecb.state.tx.us/TxHESP>.

At the Committee's inaugural meeting, Mr. Woody Hunt, Chief Executive Officer of Hunt Companies, Inc., was elected Committee Chair, and Dr. Larry Faulkner, President Emeritus of The University of Texas at Austin, was elected Vice-Chair. Afterward, the Committee received (1) an overview of committee processes; (2) a summary of population changes in Texas; (3) an update on the progress toward meeting the goals of the current Texas higher education plan, *Closing the Gaps by 2015*; and (4) an overview of the work of the Council for Continuous Improvement and Innovation in Texas Higher Education.

During and following the presentations, Committee members discussed ways to move beyond 2015 and determine how higher education can contribute best to the future success of Texas. The presentations from the first meeting are available at the Committee's website at [http://www.thecb.state.tx.us/TxHESP\\_Meeting\\_Information](http://www.thecb.state.tx.us/TxHESP_Meeting_Information).

Throughout 2014, the Committee will meet on a monthly basis, as required by workload and tasks. They will deliberate on higher education-related topics before making a focused recommendation to the Coordinating Board on the next strategic plan for higher education in Texas. During the deliberations' process, the Board will solicit public input via stakeholder meetings and online tools, such as College Town Hall-Texas (<http://www.collegetownhalltx.com>). Special meetings may be called, when deemed appropriate, by the Committee's presiding officer.

Barring technical difficulties, meetings are open to the public and broadcast live on the THECB's website at <http://www.thecb.state.tx.us>. Institutions can provide input through subcommittees and during comment periods. The next meeting of the Committee will be held at 11 a.m. on April 15.

Mary E. Smith | Assistant Deputy Commissioner |  
Academic Planning and Policy

### Education Service Center for Region 14 and THECB Host Data Fellows

The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, in partnership with Education Service Center (ESC) Region 14, hosted a one-day "Data Fellows" training in Austin. The workshop focused on using the publicly available data resources found on the THECB's website at <http://www.txhighereddata.org> with special emphasis on resources for K-12 educators and students.

Each of the 20 ESCs in Texas sent a representative, a "Data Fellow," to learn about new applications powered by state education and workforce data. During the training, THECB staff covered school district and campus-level information on high school-to-college transitions and outcomes, higher education institution profiles, higher education costs, and employment outcomes for college graduates. The training featured the following THECB applications: Tracking Postsecondary Outcomes (<http://www.howmanygotocollege.com/>), Compare College

TX (<http://www.comparecollegetx.org>), and TEXASgenuine (<http://texasgenuine.org/>).

The workshop followed a training-of-trainers (TOT) model to increase the visibility and use of the THECB's publicly available tools. At the end of the session, THECB staff asked attendees to take what they had learned and share it with their school district partners. The staff provided tools to facilitate sharing, including a primer on data resources and forthcoming video modules about data applications.

Many of the Data Fellows were unfamiliar with THECB resources and provided positive feedback about the training. One participant wrote that "it only enhances my job to have additional access to quality data on Texas students. Thank you for having us."

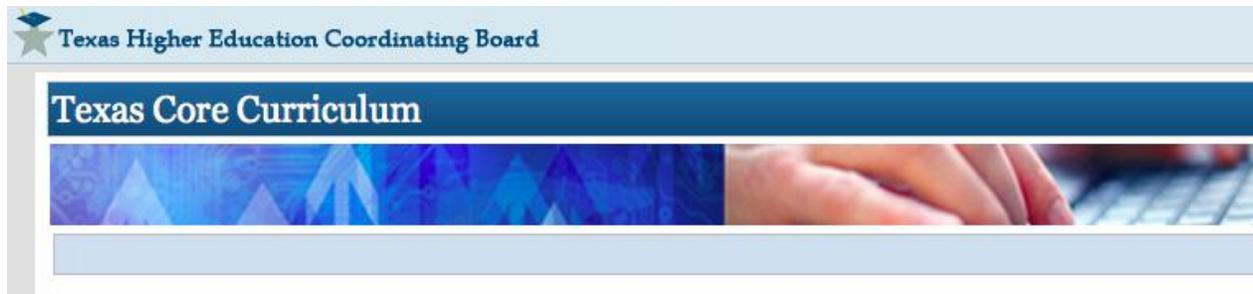
Ginger Gossman | Director of Planning | Planning & Accountability

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"It only enhances my job to have additional access to quality data on Texas students."

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### Institutions Evaluate Core Curricula, Contribute to Student Success



The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB), with the assistance of its Undergraduate Education Advisory Committee (UEAC), designed a new 42-semester-credit-hour Texas Core Curriculum (TCC) for all undergraduate students in Texas and approved its implementation starting with the 2014-15 academic year. The common core's purpose is to ensure that undergraduate students develop the essential knowledge and skills they need to be successful in college, a career, their communities, and in life — all within rapidly evolving global, national, state, and local cultures.

The TCC online submission portal was created specifically for institutions to submit their proposed 2014 Core Curriculum. The submission components consisted of each institution's course selection process, core objective assessment plan, and proposed courses. Upon receipt of the proposals, Workforce, Academic Affairs and Research (WAAR) staff at the THECB successfully completed thorough reviews and responded to the institutions.

According to THECB staff, many institutions used the submission process to evaluate their existing core

curriculum in a thoughtful and systematic way. The UEAC, THECB staff, and the Coordinating Board members intended for the new Texas Core Curriculum to lay the foundation for students to be successful in college, careers, and life. Institutions took the spirit of the curriculum's revision to heart and made genuine contributions toward student success during this process.

Beginning in fall 2014, all incoming freshmen to Texas public higher education institutions will be responsible for completing the new Core Curriculum requirements. Core Curriculum courses for all institutions will be listed in the Texas General Education Core Curriculum Web Center, which is in the final stages of development.

Additional information about the 2014 Core Curriculum and FAQs are available on the Core Curriculum website at <http://www.thecb.state.tx.us/corecurriculum2014>.

Rex C. Peebles | Assistant Commissioner | Workforce, Academic Affairs and Research

### Information About Perkins State Leadership Grants for Career and Technical Education

The Perkins State Leadership grant supports efforts to create or replicate best practices across the state and provide every student in Texas the opportunity for success. Recently, eligible Texas public postsecondary institutions submitted pre-proposals for conceptual projects for the Perkins 2014-15 State Leadership grants.

Qualified submissions will be invited to apply for project funding. Applications will be due on May 9. Donna Carlin, Assistant Director for Community and Technical Colleges ([donna.carlin@thecb.state.tx.us](mailto:donna.carlin@thecb.state.tx.us)), is the contact for information about this grant opportunity.

Past funded Perkins State Leadership projects included the following:

- The "Program of Study: Strategic Alignment" project – to develop a strategic plan to align and sustain AchieveTexas work and other curriculum alignment projects associated with programs of studies

- The "TEXASgenuine CTE State Project" – to encourage partnerships between educational entities and business/industry by promoting CTE programs at community and technical colleges and providing access to resources/materials for this purpose
- The "MPOWER Texas" project – to develop an e-course to provide professional development to high school and college guidance counselors on the value, need, and availability of CTE pathways in Texas

For more information about previously funded projects visit <http://www.texasperkins.org/index.php>.

Elizabeth Steele | Program Director, Community and Technical Colleges | Workforce, Academic Affairs and Research

### Regional Meetings Discuss Proposed TSI Operational Plan

The staff of the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) conducted several regional meetings across the state in January and February to present the proposed Texas Success Initiative (TSI) Operational Plan. The nine recommendations of the TSI Plan provide guidance to public higher education institutions responsible for identifying and serving students assessed with basic academic skill levels in reading, writing, and/or mathematics on the new TSI Assessment (TSIA) launched in fall 2013. Texas Education Code (TEC), Section 51.3062 requires all incoming students who are not otherwise exempt to demonstrate college readiness in the three subject areas prior to enrollment in entry-level college coursework.

Unlike the previously approved college-readiness assessment instruments, such as the ACCUPLACER and THEA, the new TSIA provides a diagnostic profile for students who do not meet the college readiness threshold. Institutions, as a result, receive more detailed information and are able to tailor interventions to target students' academically weak areas while continuing to build on students' strengths. The diagnostic profile also provides important information to advisors, faculty, and support staff

who are able to assess and place students by considering multiple factors, as opposed to a single placement test score.

The TSI Plan's nine recommendations address funding options, professional development, a multi-agency statewide online referral system, multi-skilled students, referrals and services from partnering state agencies – such as TWC's federally funded Adult Education/Literacy programs – and a phase-in of the implementation timeline. More than 1,000 stakeholders from Amarillo, Midland, Dallas, El Paso, McAllen, Killeen, Houston, San Antonio, and Tyler provided feedback and input related to the nine recommendations through face-to-face meetings or online surveys, which offered an additional opportunity for feedback.

A follow-up webinar will be held on Tuesday, April 8, from 10:00 a.m. to noon and will be repeated Wednesday, April 9, from 1:00-3:00 p.m.; registration information is available at <http://www.thecb.state.tx.us/tsi>.

After revising the TSI Plan, THECB staff will present the final version to the Board on April 24, 2014, for consideration for approval.

Suzanne Morales-Vale | Director of Developmental and Adult Education | P-16 Initiatives

### Workshops Offer Scaling and Sustainability Tools for Program Life After Grants



Source: FutUndBeidj, Flickr

Scaling and sustaining programs initially funded by grants is challenging. In early March the University of Houston, through funding provided by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, hosted scaling and sustainability workshops for recipients of either an AVID for Higher Education (AHE) or a Comprehensive Student

Success Program (CSSP) grant. AHE and the CSSP incorporate interventions to increase college success in postsecondary institutions through student support services,

faculty and staff training, and rigorous data collection to track student success.

The purpose of the workshops was to help participants learn a framework for scaling and create a plan for sustaining project work. The workshops provided tools and strategies participants could take back to their institutions to develop plans for continuing their programs beyond grant funding.

Thirteen institutions, both two- and four-year, participated in the workshops. MDC, Inc., a nonprofit group, conducted the workshops. MDC publishes research and develops programs focused on expanding opportunity, reducing poverty, and addressing structural inequity.

Claudette Jenks | Assistant Director | Division of P-16 Initiatives

### TACHE Conference Attendees Connect with Coordinating Board Projects and Tools

The Texas Association of Chicanos in Higher Education (TACHE) Conference is designed to assess the needs and promote the goals of Hispanics in higher education. This conference attracts statewide and national attention by bringing together representatives from both public school

and higher education institutions, state government, corporations, private industry, and nonprofit organizations.

The 39th annual conference convened on February 19 and included information about the THECB's projects and tools found on page five of this newsletter.

TACHE Conference  
 Continued from page 4

<p><b>Generation TX:</b> A college and career readiness movement with united communities statewide; has inspired thousands of students to take the steps to prepare for a successful postsecondary future</p>	<p>For three years, this multifaceted community engagement and marketing campaign has been successful in uniting communities across Texas through thousands of educational ambassadors in school districts, colleges, universities, businesses, nonprofits, and community organizations. Conference attendees learned the role of P-16 Councils in individual communities to align educational support for college and career readiness; the role of social media in educational marketing and best practices; and how educators, nonprofits, and colleges and universities can partner with Generation TX to promote college and career readiness in their communities.</p>
<p><b>Academic Vertical Alignment Training And Renewal (AVATAR):</b> A statewide network focused on vertical alignment to support students' college and career readiness</p>	<p>The THECB funded the initial pilot and project implemented by the North Texas Regional P-16 Council and the University of North Texas. The Region 20 Vertical Alignment team includes members from Harlandale Independent School District; The University of Texas at San Antonio; Alamo Colleges; the P16Plus Council of Greater Bexar County; and the Education Service Center for Region 20. Presenters gave updates on their outcomes and products.</p>
<p><b>(Accelerate Texas) ATX:</b> An initiative of the THECB, in collaboration with the Texas Workforce Commission, to engage Texas community colleges to implement integrated pathways for advancing lower-skilled adult learners into high-demand occupations</p>	<p>Conference attendees were given an update on the progress and success of these colleges, strategies to institutionalize these approaches, and efforts to expand the programs to additional colleges across the state. Presenters discussed how ATX is connecting with major state policy initiatives, including a new universal state college placement assessment and new efforts to connect federally funded adult education programs (both within and outside community colleges) to career pathways.</p>
<p><b>The Comprehensive Student Success Program (CSSP):</b> Funded by the U.S. Department of Education College Access Challenge Grant, supports institutions in identifying entry-level courses with high rates of non-completion and in using data to design and implement systems for early alert and successful intervention</p>	<p>Presenters discussed how institutions develop rigorously crafted student support interventions, enhanced faculty and staff training focusing on student persistence and success, and continued refinement of early alert systems. Attendees also learned about services to students, such as increased counseling, advising, learning-strategy course components, course-embedded tutors, and supplemental instructors. Presenters said that an estimated 8,000 students will be served from April 2011 to August 2013.</p>
<p><b>The FAFSA Tool, HowManyGotoCollegeTX.com, CompareCollegeTX.com, and CollegeMeasures.Org/esm/Texas:</b> THECB's online financial aid tools</p>	<p>The tools presented to attendees included the FAFSA Initiative, which gives high school counselors access to verifiable and actionable information to help them increase FAFSA completion (<a href="http://ApplyTexas.org">ApplyTexas.org</a>); <a href="http://HowManyGotoCollegeTX.com">HowManyGotoCollegeTX.com</a>, which tracks the postsecondary success of a school's graduates in Texas; <a href="http://CompareCollegeTX.com">CompareCollegeTX.com</a>, which helps students and parents evaluate and select colleges; and <a href="http://CollegeMeasures.Org/esm/Texas">CollegeMeasures.Org/esm/Texas</a>, which helps students evaluate college degree programs by the first-year earnings of graduates.</p>
<p><b>Texas A&amp;M University - Corpus Christi (TAMUCC) Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) Postsecondary Project:</b> A project funded by a THECB grant in 2010</p>	<p>TAMUCC provided an overview of their project research to attendees, who learned that in fall 2012 TAMUCC faculty trained in AVID strategies taught in the AVID-infused First Year Learning Community courses including the first-year seminar. Students trained as AVID mentors and tutors also participated in the AVID-Infused Courses, and the Islander Transition Center was designated the AVID Center. The purpose of this research was to evaluate the effectiveness of these interventions.</p>

Natalie Coffey | Director, Recruitment and Retention | P-16 Initiatives

### **Families Receive Critical Financial Aid Information from Telethons**

The 2014 College Access and Affordability Telethons were broadcast during February in observance of February as “Financial Aid Month.” The collaborative efforts of the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) and Texas Guaranteed Student Loan Corporation (TG) provided thousands of students and families with information critical to embarking on or continuing their higher education journey.

Six markets broadcast the telethons on seven dates. The following stations participated: KXLN, Houston Univision; KLTV/KTRE, Tyler-Longview-Lufkin; KUVN, Dallas-Fort Worth Univision; KSAT-TV, San Antonio; KFDM, Beaumont; and KCBD, Lubbock. Reporters broadcasted live from the telethons during their station’s afternoon and evening newscasts.

The THECB staff and TG volunteers answered the phones in English and Spanish at the Financial Aid Information Center located at TG headquarters in Round Rock. The THECB’s Advise-TX participation included 22 advisers from The University of Texas at Austin and Trinity University on four separate evenings. These advisers are currently serving 20 different school districts in San Antonio and Central Texas.

For the Houston-area broadcast, the THECB staff recruited additional phone volunteers from the THECB Work-Study Mentorship Program. Ten work-study mentors and program sponsors from Texas Woman’s University drove more than three hours from Denton to Round Rock to answer phones.



Mentors from Mentoring to Achieve Latino Educational Success (Project MALES) also participated during the telethon. Project MALES, funded by the THECB and administered by The University of Texas at Austin, fosters discussion and relationship building among undergraduate mentors and male students at Travis and Lanier High Schools in Austin ISD.

Natalie Coffey | Director, Recruitment and Retention | P-16 Initiatives

### **Temple College’s Texas Bioscience Institute Recognized for Excellence**

Temple College’s Texas Bioscience Institute (TBI) was recognized for excellence by the Coordinating Board at the January 2014 meeting as an innovative program model that promotes scholarship and student success for undergraduates majoring in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM).

Housed in the heart of the Scott & White medical research campus in Temple, the Temple College-TBI program is increasing STEM graduation rates through the targeted recruitment of four distinct audiences: high school juniors and seniors studying in residence at the TBI’s “Middle College”; traditional community college students enrolled at the TBI in the associate of applied science degree program in Biotechnology; traditional community college students enrolled in the Apprenticeship for Laboratory Animal Technicians certificate program; and recent and soon-to-be veterans from the armed services.

Students participating in the Temple College-TBI program model are being partially supported by “The Central

Texas 2-STEP” project funded by a \$1.2 million STEP (Science Talent Enhancement Program) grant from the National Science Foundation. This grant focuses on supporting the best practices shown to increase student interest and persistence in STEM fields. Undergraduate research opportunities, seminars with practicing STEM professionals, meaningful career counseling, and peer-to-peer tutoring in STEM gateway courses are all components of the “2-STEP” project.

The TBI has significantly increased the enrollment of first-generation college students, underrepresented minorities, and women pursuing associate degrees in STEM-related undergraduate studies. The TBI also has successfully transitioned these students into baccalaureate programs at major universities and colleges. For more information, visit <http://www.templejc.edu/Centers/TBI/Home.aspx>.

Mary E. Smith | Assistant Deputy Commissioner | Academic Planning and Policy

The *APP E-NEWS* is published quarterly by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB). It is written, edited, and compiled by the THECB staff. For newsletter questions or comments, contact Ramona Reeves, Writer/Editor, Academic Planning and Policy, email: [ramona.reeves@thecb.state.tx.us](mailto:ramona.reeves@thecb.state.tx.us) or phone: (512) 427-6434

### What Frederic Lord, CAT, and TSIA Have in Common

The Texas Success Initiative Assessment (TSIA) tests the three academic skills of mathematics, reading, and writing. The first two areas are tested using Computer Adaptive Testing (CAT), while the writing component is tested using a combination of the Writing multiple-choice CAT and, if a test taker scores high enough, an essay examination. The essay exam is the only part of the TSIA that is not computer adaptive. But the question is, what is CAT and why does the TSIA use this method of testing?

Suppose you wanted to accurately assess a person's knowledge of the mathematical ability necessary for college. You could give a lengthy test covering the areas relevant to knowledge in college math. That test would probably take hours and present the test taker with a lot of different questions that might have nothing to do with the person's ability. This method, however, is how much mathematical testing worked in the past.

In 1952, a new method was proposed by Frederic Lord in his dissertation at Princeton University. Simply put, Lord's method, which later became known as Item Response Theory (IRT), was to fit the test to the test taker's ability.

That is, if the test taker correctly answered a question, a harder question followed. An incorrect response produced an easier question. This process continued until the test taker's ability was determined for the area being tested. At the time, the method of adapting questions to a test taker's ability was too complex to put to practical use.

In the late 1960s, however, the computer revolution brought the advent of high-speed computation. This technology enabled Lord's proposal to come to fruition through a method of testing known as Computer Adaptive Testing, or CAT. CAT is used by the THECB for the TSIA to efficiently and accurately assess a test taker's ability in three subjects within the shortest time and with the most reliable and valid method available. The development of TSIA is an ongoing process to continuously improve the assessment for college readiness in Texas and identify the most effective means to measure student ability.

Alan C. Bugbee, Ph.D. | Senior Project Manager, TSI Assessment | P-16 Initiatives

### THECB Launches 2014 Almanac and CompareCollegeTX.com

The fourth edition of the *Texas Public Higher Education Almanac* is now available at [www.thecb.state.tx.us/Almanac](http://www.thecb.state.tx.us/Almanac). New for 2014 is the inclusion of first-year and long-term earnings data for Texas college graduates, disaggregated by degree level and field. Also, for the second year, the THECB is providing an online companion to the almanac at [www.CompareCollegeTX.com](http://www.CompareCollegeTX.com), a site where users can easily select and compare colleges based on metrics reported in the almanac. Produced in collaboration with College

Measures, this interactive, mobile-friendly tool also links to wage data for graduates by degree level and major for every Texas public higher education institution.

The almanac is a collaborative effort between the THECB and College for All Texans Foundation with grant funding from Houston Endowment. *Compare College TX* is funded by a grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

Sarah Rondinelli | Program Specialist | Office of Development

21<sup>st</sup> Century Symposium *Continued from page 1*

community college. Dr. Teresa Sullivan, President, University of Virginia, offered the second keynote address and focused on the university setting. After the presentations and an audience Q&A, attendees broke into six groups and utilized a "design thinking" process to consider purposes for higher education that might best serve the individual student of the future. Design thinking, a cognitive problem-solving process developed by IDEO and utilized at the Design School of Stanford University, approaches challenges from the point of view of the end user – in this case the student.

Dr. Van Davis, Director of Innovations in Higher Education for the THECB, summarized the work performed by the break-out groups. A roundtable comprised of Dr. Katharine Brooks, Executive Director for Personal and Career Development, Wake Forest University; Dr. Dennis Brown,

President, Lee College; Dr. David E. Daniel, President, The University of Texas at Dallas; and moderator Dr. Jesse Rogers, President, Midwestern State University, discussed the issues raised during the symposium with an emphasis on Texas higher education.

A white paper on the symposium's proceedings is forthcoming. A hard copy and video of the presentations are available at <http://framingthefutureofhighered.org>. The site also contains information about the second symposium, "Higher Education Instruction and Learning in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century," scheduled for July 11 at the AT&T Executive Education and Conference Center.

Judith A. Sebesta | Project Manager | Higher Education Policy Institute