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2014 Texas Public Higher Education Almanac features new statewide earnings profile

April 7, 2014 – Austin, Texas – For those who ask “Is college really worth it?” the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board has added a statewide earnings profile to its fourth annual *Texas Public Higher Education Almanac* that launched today as part of the agency’s core mission to promote transparency and accountability among Texas public institutions of higher education.

The earnings profile includes workforce earnings data highlighting individual first-year and long-term earnings for certain degree programs as well as a range of credential levels. Earnings data are derived from the Texas Unemployment Insurance Wage Record and include only those students who graduated from Texas higher education institutions and were subsequently employed in the state. The earnings data is intended to help illustrate the value of higher education, from marketable skills training and credentials to professional degrees.

The 2014 *Almanac* – available online at www.thehb.state.tx.us/Almanac -- provides higher education facts and performance data that allow users to compare Texas public higher education institutions. The data provide a snapshot of how Texas is doing educationally and highlight progress relative to the state’s higher education plan, *Closing the Gaps by 2015*. The *Almanac* draws from data found in the agency’s accountability system -- long recognized as a “best practice” national model for higher education performance data.

As reported in a February 2014 Pew Research study entitled “The Rising Cost of Not Going to College,” young adults who pursue and obtain some form of higher education are outperforming their less educated peers when it comes to economic well-being and career attainment. Without a postsecondary credential, certificate or degree, students may lower their earnings potential, stunt their career path and limit their future.

To better help students and parents make informed decisions about the value of higher education, the THECB provides an online companion to the *Almanac* at www.CompareCollegeTX.com. This interactive tool – funded by a grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation -- allows users to make side-by-side comparisons of Texas higher education institutions based on measures reported in the *Almanac*. Produced in collaboration with College Measures, this comprehensive, mobile-friendly tool also links to wage data for graduates by degree level and major for individual Texas public higher education institutions.

The *Almanac* and CompareCollegeTX.com are designed to place the most relevant data and information on Texas public institutional performance in the hands of policymakers, students, parents and the general public. This year’s almanac was a public-private partnership between the THECB, College for All Texans Foundation and Houston Endowment, Inc. The THECB compiled and organized existing data for use in the almanac. Private funding paid for the design, printing, and delivery.

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THECB Mission Statement

The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board’s mission is to work with the legislature, governor, governing boards, higher education institutions, and other entities to help Texas meet the goals of the state’s higher education plan, *Closing the Gaps by 2015*, and thereby provide the people of Texas the widest access to higher education of the highest quality in the most efficient manner.

Key data and information

- Enrollment in all Texas higher education institutions (two-year and four-year public, independent, and career institutions) has **increased 55 percent** since 2000. (p. 15)
- The annual number of degrees and certificates awarded at all Texas higher education institutions has increased by **109 percent** since 2000. (p. 16)
- Texas graduates who achieved a **bachelor's degree** in 2011, and were subsequently employed in Texas, earned an average of **\$37,425** during their first year after graduation; Texas graduates who achieved an **associate's degree** or **certificate** in 2011, and were subsequently employed in Texas, earned an average of **\$33,150** and **\$33,180** respectively during their first year after graduation. (p. 11)
- Texas **ranks third nationally** in average tuition at public, two-year institutions (\$1,762). (p. 7)
- Texas **ranks 22nd nationally** in average tuition at public, four-year institutions (\$7,116). (p. 7)
- Texas **ranks 29th nationally** in attainment of bachelor's degrees. (p. 7)
- Texas **ranks 44th nationally** in attainment of associate degrees. (p. 7)
- **22 percent** of students enrolled at a public four-year university were enrolled part-time. (p.26)
- **73 percent** students enrolled at a public community college were enrolled part-time. (p. 48)
- Of every 100 students enrolled (full- or part-time) at a public university, **59** students earned a postsecondary degree within six years; **30** students were no longer enrolled at any institution and earned no degree at the six-year mark. (p. 10)
- Of every 100 students enrolled (full- or part-time) at a public community college seeking a degree, **28** students earned postsecondary degree or certificate within six years; **61** students were no longer enrolled at any institution and earned no postsecondary award at the six-year mark. (p. 10)
- On average, a full-time student needed **five years** and **141 credit hours** to complete a bachelor's degree that requires four years and 120 credit hours. (p. 10)
- Of every 100 students enrolled in the eighth grade in Texas in academic year 2002-03, 68 graduated from high school, **52** enrolled in higher education in Texas, and **20** received a higher education degree or certificate in Texas by 2013. (p. 9)