

## Texas Second Interim (Report Period Two) Narrative Report

**Legal Name of Organization:** College for All Texans Foundation on behalf of the  
Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB)

**Common Name of Organization:** THECB

**Lumina Foundation Issued Grant Number:** 6701

**Grant start date:** 12.01.09

**Grant end date:** 11.30.13

### **Progress on Goals, Activities, and Timelines:**

Texas' productivity agenda has two major goals with associated strategies: 1) funding institutions based on outcomes, and 2) developing learning outcomes first at the program level ("Tuning") and then learning objectives at the course level ("Fine-Tuning" of horizontal and vertical course alignment) for statewide articulation agreements. While there are no major changes in activities for either of the two goals, the Tuning/Fine-Tuning Timeline dated June 11, 2010 [included with the Texas Interim (6 month) Narrative Report] was too optimistic in terms of Tuning deliverables, particularly with respect to surveying engineering students, employers, faculty, and recent graduates. Securing Institutional Review Board approval at the individual institution level prior to distributing these surveys took longer than initially anticipated. **Appendix A** provides a detailed listing of tasks accomplished from June 1, 2010 through October 31, 2010.

### **Goal One: Funding on Outcomes; Milestones and Progress:**

*Regional Meetings.* Since the first of seven planned Regional Meetings was held in Tyler, Texas on May 16, 2010, six additional Regional Meetings have been held in various locations of the state:

- WEST TEXAS REGIONAL ROUNDTABLE
  - June, 16, 2010; 11:30 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.; Texas Tech University, Lubbock
- GULF COAST REGION ROUNDTABLE
  - August 26, 2010; 11:30 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.; San Jacinto College – Central Campus, Pasadena
- UPPER RIO GRANDE REGION ROUNDTABLE
  - September 16, 2010; 10:30 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.; The University of Texas at El Paso
- NORTH TEXAS REGION ROUNDTABLE
  - September 29, 2010; 11:00 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.; The Old Red Museum, Dallas
- SOUTH TEXAS REGION ROUNDTABLE\*
  - October 6, 2010; 11:30 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.; Texas A&M University-Kingsville
- CENTRAL TEXAS REGION ROUNDTABLE
  - October 20, 2010; 11:30 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.; Embassy Suites Hotel & Conference Center, San Marcos

\* The South Texas Regional Roundtable, initially scheduled to be held on July 8, 2010, at Texas State Technical College-Harlingen, was cancelled and rescheduled due to the threat of severe weather associated with a tropical depression (potentially Tropical Storm Bonnie) in the Gulf of Mexico. The storm on July 8 was scheduled to make landfall on the South Texas Coast at the time the scheduled meeting was to have adjourned at 3:30 p.m., so the South Texas Regional Roundtable was rescheduled to be held after the hurricane season.

The following modifications were made to the Regional Meetings as a result of lessons learned from the East Texas Regional Roundtable in Tyler, Texas; the review of participants' feedback on Regional Meeting evaluation forms; and feedback from our qualitative evaluation consultant:

- Meeting materials were made more focused to provide very basic information understandable to an audience with no background in higher education funding.
- Staff modified the content of PowerPoint slides and the oral presentations to provide less data and do a better job of explaining how institutions are currently funded.
- The basic agenda for the meetings was revised. A luncheon was included to encourage early attendance and networking. To eliminate a divergent focus during the meetings, the agenda item meant to highlight the achievements of previous Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board Star Award winners from the region was eliminated; instead, more time was allowed for questions to be raised during presentations and discussion to be held afterwards in small groups.
- While small discussion groups continued to be made up of meeting participants at each physical table, the table seating was pre-assigned in advance. Tables were supplied with numbers visible at a distance on wire stems. Discussion group assignments were made easily visible through the printing of assigned table numbers on each participant's name badge.
- Three specific discussion questions were provided on paper and placed on each table so that participants could write out the group's answers to the questions, as well as provide the answers to the larger group orally. Publicly delivered oral responses from each small group's spokesperson were audio recorded for later review (as was each entire meeting), and handwritten responses were collected at the conclusion of each meeting and later summarized in typewritten form.

As an example, please see **Appendix B** for the Agenda of the Gulf Coast Regional Roundtable held on August 26, 2010; the small group discussion questions for this meeting; participants' answers to the discussion questions; and meeting summary evaluation. (Please contact the THECB should additional examples from the other Regional Meetings be needed.) Meeting materials can be found online at: <http://www.thecb.state.tx.us/regionalroundtable>

*Meetings of the Community College Presidents and Trustees Work Group.* Besides involving stakeholders in the Regional Meetings across the state, the THECB recently formed a work group consisting of two Board members of the THECB, four representatives of the THECB's executive staff, three representatives of the Texas Association of Community Colleges, and three representatives of the Community College Association of Texas Trustees. This 12-member Community College Presidents and Trustees Work Group has held two face-to-face meetings during this report period, one on September 15 and the other on October 13. The focus of both meetings was on the THECB's legislative recommendation to fund public community and technical colleges partially on the basis of outcomes – specifically, the outcomes-based funding model would allocate 10 percent of base funding relative to educational milestones (or Momentum Points) met by students; 90 percent would continue to reflect enrollment trends. Discussion at both meetings involved the points institutions would receive for all the milestones completed by their students during that year. The October 13 Work Group meeting also involved planning for the *Summit of Community College Leaders* that was held on November 9, 2010, immediately after the THECB's annual *Texas Higher Education Leadership Conference and State of Higher Education Luncheon*. (A description of the activities of the Leadership Conference and associated Summit, both of which were focused on the importance and value of student success and completion, will be covered in the next interim report which will summarize activities beginning November 1, 2010.) Please see **Appendix C** for the agendas for the meetings of the Community College Presidents and Trustees Work Group. The Work Group will hold additional meetings to define the milestones and data associated with those milestones.

*Funding Recommendations.* As stated in the first Interim Report, on April 29, 2010, the Coordinating Board adopted the Commissioner's Formula Funding Recommendations for the 2012-2013 biennium to

address enrollment growth and modify the formulas to increase course completion and degree/certificate attainment while reducing costs to the state and students and their families. These recommendations were forwarded to the Legislative Budget Board (LBB) on June 3.

For Fiscal Years (FY) 2012-13, the recommended funding level for community/technical colleges continues to be equivalent to the FY 2010-11 formula funding amounts with an additional 19 percent for growth, based on attempted contact hours. In addition, as forwarded to the LBB, the recommendation continues to include the addition of a second formula, which constitutes 10 percent of the base formula amount that would be allocated based on milestones of students' progression towards a degree/certificate or transfer to a four-year institution. The milestones are in the process of being defined in consultation with the Community College Presidents and Trustees Work Group as described above, and the feedback provided by participants of the *Summit for Community College Leaders* held on November 9.

The recommended funding level for the General Academic Institutions has been revised as a result of feedback received from participants at the Regional Meetings, members of the Texas State Legislature, representatives of higher education institutions, and other higher education stakeholders. As forwarded to the LBB, the recommended funding level for the General Academic Institutions continues to be equivalent to the FY 2010-11 amounts with an additional 4 percent for growth. However, the recommendation has been revised so that in FY 2012, all funding would continue to be allocated on attempted hours; in FY 2013, funding for graduate students would be allocated 100 percent based on attempted hours, and funding for undergraduate students would be allocated 90 percent based on attempted hours and 10 percent based on outcomes measures. These outcomes measures would include the total number of bachelor's degrees awarded; the total number of bachelor's degrees awarded in STEM, nursing, allied health, and math/science teacher certifications; and the total number of bachelor's degrees awarded to students who meet one of five federal at-risk criteria. Half of the outcomes-based funding would be allocated based on biennium-to-biennium increases in these factors; half would be allocated based on three-year averages of these factors.

*Meetings with Regents.* As stated in the first Interim Report, Commissioner Paredes addressed seven Boards of Regents from December 2009 through May 2011 to give them an overview of funding recommendations and how the recommendations have been changed to address concerns expressed in the last session of the Texas State Legislature. Since June 1, Commissioner Paredes addressed the Board of Regents of Texas Southern University on June 18, 2010, and he had a luncheon with all of the Chairs of the Boards of Regents on October 20, 2010. With the exception of Texas Southern University, all universities were represented at this October 20 luncheon. Commissioner Paredes is scheduled to address the Boards of Regents of the final two university systems at the beginning of 2011 – the Board of Regents of the University of Houston System on February 17, 2011, and the Board of Regents of Texas Woman's University on February 18, 2011.

*Interim Committees and Legislative Briefings.* As part of a comprehensive outreach effort, the THECB's Office of External Relations (OER) has coordinated regular opportunities for senior leaders of the Coordinating Board and staff to interface directly with key legislators and their staff, business and public interest organizations, and community leaders throughout Texas during the interim session. The primary objective of this outreach plan is to help inform and educate stakeholders about key Coordinating Board initiatives. Secondary objectives include improving professional working relationships with key stakeholders as well as improving the agency's reputation as a proactive partner in developing good educational policy.

- *Legislative Listening Tours.* One outreach strategy that has been employed regularly by OER is the Legislative Listening Tour—small group meetings between senior THECB staff and legislative staff. The framework for these meetings is very informal, allowing legislative staff to ask questions outside normal channels (e.g., legislative hearings) and provide feedback to Coordinating Board staff about initiatives. These tours have focused specifically on the following key committees: Senate Higher Education, Senate Finance, House Higher Education, House Appropriations Subcommittee on Education, and have included staff from the Lieutenant

Governor's office, the Speaker's office, and Governor's office. The Legislative Listening Tours were suspended due to November elections. However, OER anticipates holding additional Listening Tours related to the final Coordinating Board legislative agenda as well as higher education orientation for new members prior to the beginning of the next legislative session in January 2011.

- *Quarterly Legislative Aides' Briefing.* Prior to each quarterly Board meeting, the OER coordinates an opportunity for all staff at the Legislature to meet the Commissioner and senior Coordinating Board staff to discuss key initiatives or issues to be addressed at the Board meeting. These meetings included 20-40 staff members representing a diverse group of offices, including those not regularly engaged by the Coordinating Board. The meetings allow the Commissioner to address key issues as well as take questions from staff.
- *Meetings with Legislators.* Throughout the interim, OER has coordinated meetings between key legislators and the Commissioner to discuss issues. These meetings, when appropriate, also include senior leadership of the Coordinating Board. To date, these meetings have included key legislators in the Texas House of Representatives and Texas Senate. In addition to key legislators, the Commissioner and senior staff meet regularly with executive staff from the Governor's office to include higher education analysts David Young, Kate McGrath, and Marisha Negovetich, as well as the Governor's Chief of Staff, Ray Sullivan.

### **Major Changes Affecting the Work:**

*Fiscal Environment.* Texas had escaped the effects of the national economic downturn until recently. Early projected budget deficits of \$15 to \$18 billion have now been increased to \$24 billion going into the next legislative session. State agencies, including institutions of higher education, have already been required to make budget cuts of 5 percent and have now been asked to plan for an *additional* 10 percent cut. Of the first round of state budget cuts, 43 percent came from higher education. (Some state agencies such as prisons and health/human services were excluded from the budget cuts.) THECB's funding formula recommendations have been based on projections of the state being able to fund enrollment growth, but in the current environment it is questionable whether that will happen. If enrollment growth is not funded, it will be even more difficult for institutions to support the proposed formula funding changes. The worst case scenario for an institution would then be an actual loss in funding rather than a smaller increase.

*Team/Personnel Changes.* As stated in the first Interim Report, the two grant-funded positions were filled in May, and the employees hired for these positions have just passed their six-month probation period and are greatly facilitating the progress of work on both goals. Additionally, to help facilitate the work of the Tuning Oversight Council for Engineering and the four respective discipline-specific engineering committees that comprise the Oversight Council, staff liaisons have been assigned to assist the chairs and co-chairs of each committee, coordinate the work of the committee members, and respond to requests for information and assistance. A training session for these four staff liaisons was held on July 16 and included information about Tuning, group facilitation, needed deliverables, etc. Mary Smith, project coordinator, and the evaluation team continue to evaluate the work of these liaisons to ensure that THECB staff do not inadvertently usurp the roles of faculty in any way. Review and evaluation indicates that having one staff facilitator assigned to each group is a very good way to facilitate the work of Tuning efforts by faculty.

*Public Agenda.* Lumina is providing funding for Public Agenda to assist two Making Opportunity Affordable grantee states, and Texas has been selected as one of the states to receive this additional resource. With their assistance, Texas will be able to add the student voice regarding what current and former Texas college students view as the greatest obstacles to completion and what they think would most help them to succeed. Specifically, Public Agenda will be conducting a qualitative research project to inform Texas' student success and productivity work in general as well as the THECB's Project Pathways data sharing initiative that is taking place in Bexar County (San Antonio), El Paso County (El Paso), and Harris County (Houston). The product will be a report that brings student voices to the current higher education reform

dialogue. Texas is supplementing the Lumina-funded work to add focus groups. A preliminary report in July will supplement and provide a qualitative dimension to a planned data-intensive "Higher Education Almanac" to be published in January 2011.

*College Access Challenge Grant.* The Governor of Texas has designated the THECB as the applicant for and administrator of the College Access Challenge Grant (CACG) Program for the State of Texas. Each state is eligible to receive one non-competitive grant; the amount of the grant for the State of Texas will be \$11,845,689. The CACG Program is a formula grant program designed to foster partnerships among federal, state, and local government entities and philanthropic organizations to significantly increase the number of under-represented students who enter and remain in postsecondary education. The goal of the CACG in Texas is to build statewide support for a college-going culture, and ultimately to increase the number of degrees and credentials earned by under-represented students in postsecondary education.

*Report on Higher Education Cost Efficiencies.* As directed by Executive Order RP 73 issued in September 2009, the THECB has submitted to the Governor of Texas the *Report on Higher Education Cost Efficiencies*. The THECB assembled a strong 20-member team of Texas higher education and business leaders for the Advisory Committee on Higher Education Cost Efficiencies (ACCE). This diverse group of state leaders met seven times to engage in a comprehensive, system-wide review of higher education with the goal of achieving meaningful cost efficiencies. They met with state and national experts, identified and reviewed strategies, and helped draft the final recommendations included in the report. The work was guided by a simple principle: Texas must achieve better productivity from higher education in a manner that is more cost-effective but does not diminish the quality of Texas institutions. In this report is a series of short- and long-term strategies that Texas can begin to implement to accomplish this goal. These strategies are organized under the following five big ideas: Funding Results – Paying for Performance; Creating Clear Pathways for Successful Student Outcomes; Meeting Demand with New Approaches to Delivery; Making Capital Financing Make Sense – for Both New Buildings and Deferred Maintenance; and Making Productivity and Continuous Improvement a Cultural Change. To ensure recommendations were meaningful, estimated cost savings for each strategy are included in the report and detailed in the appendix. For implementation purposes, also provided are examples of current state practices. The report and information about the ACCE is available at: <http://www.thecb.state.tx.us/acce>.

### **Goal Two: Tuning at Program and Course Levels; Milestones and Progress:**

The Tuning/Fine-Tuning Timeline dated June 11, 2010, projected the delivery of final Tuning documentation on four disciplines in January 2011. We now estimate that it will be March 2011 before that work is completed. It will include four disciplines: Electrical, Mechanical, Civil, and Industrial Engineering. As stated above, staff liaisons were assigned to assist the chairs and co-chairs of each committee. Additionally, webcams were purchased, packed, and shipped to all members of the Tuning Oversight Council for Engineering who needed them, and the four discipline-specific committees have been using the webcams along with the THECB's Live Meeting software (the licensure agreement extends to committees working to assist the THECB) to do much of their work online between face-to-face meetings to minimize travel costs. SharePoint sites also have been established for each discipline-specific committee through which members can share working documents.

*Face-to-Face Tuning Meetings.* The Tuning Oversight Council for Engineering met face-to-face for their third and fourth full Oversight Council meetings on July 30 and October 15. During these meetings, information applicable to all four discipline-specific engineering committees was shared and discussed among all members of the Oversight Council prior to the four discipline-specific committees breaking into their own meetings in separate rooms for continued Tuning work on their respective disciplines. The perceived potential conflict between ABET criteria for evaluating engineering programs and Tuning has become less of a concern of engineering faculty represented on the Oversight Council as a result of continued discussion regarding the similarities and differences between Tuning and ABET evaluation criteria. Following their own discipline-specific discussions, committees reported out their progress to the full Oversight Council at the end of each of these two face-to-face meetings. As an example, please see **Appendix D** for the agendas pertaining to the Oversight Council meeting on July 30, the minutes for the

meetings sessions, and meeting summary evaluation. (Please contact the THECB should examples from the October 15 meeting be needed.)

*Online Discipline-Specific Committee Meetings.* As stated above, discipline-specific committees have been meeting individually, primarily online using webcams, Live Meeting software, and SharePoint sites. They continue to progress at different paces; nevertheless, it is anticipated that all discipline-specific committees will have Tuning deliverables accomplished by the time of the January 2011 meeting, tentatively scheduled for January 7, and will begin working on course-level learning objectives alignment at this meeting. Below are the meeting dates and summary progress to date for each of these discipline-specific committees:

- *Civil Engineering Committee.* Online meetings were held July 21, August 24, and September 17; face-to-face meetings were held on July 30 and October 15 in conjunction with the full Oversight Council meetings.
  - The Civil Engineering Committee has finished its work on the civil engineering competency table with the categories: 1) core competencies needed to enter higher education in civil engineering; 2) pre-engineering competencies gained during first two years of study; 3) baccalaureate-level engineering competencies; and 4) post-graduate engineering competencies.
  - The Committee's work has been informed by the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCEE) *Civil Engineering Body of Knowledge for the 21st Century, 2nd Edition, 2008 (BOK2E)*. The Committee, however, focused on current ABET-driven competency requirements, rather than on ASCEE goals for the future development of the profession.
  - The Committee also finished its civil engineering key competencies profile, which is a schematic summary of the civil engineering competency table.
  - The Committee established civil engineering profiles for expertise and employment. The expertise profile lists 10 types of coursework necessary for the completion of a baccalaureate degree in civil engineering, and the employment profile lists seven types of jobs available for civil engineers.
  - The Committee still has to complete work on one-page descriptions for outcome titles from the competency table. Again, the Committee's work for this deliverable will be informed by the descriptions established by *BOK2E*, but the Committee wishes to streamline and alter the text to reflect its work on the competency tabulation. This work is anticipated to be completed prior to the next meeting of the Tuning Oversight Council in January 2011.
- *Electrical Engineering Committee.* A combination face-to-face and online meeting was held September 10 in Arlington, with another such combination meeting planned for December 3. Face-to-face meetings were held on July 30 and October 15 in conjunction with the full Oversight Council meetings.
  - The Electrical Engineering Committee has finished its work on its 16 program-level outcomes (summaries) and the electrical engineering key competencies profile.
  - The Committee's work was informed by the common and non-common elements of program outcomes found at the University of North Texas, The University of Texas at Arlington, The University of Texas at Tyler, and Prairie View A&M University. The Committee's work was also informed by the 2010-2011 ABET Criteria for Electrical, Computer, and similarly named engineering programs (Lead Society: Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers; Cooperating Society for Computer Engineering Programs: CSAB).
  - The Committee still has to complete work on the definition of the discipline, key competencies by educational level, and expertise/employment profile. This work is anticipated to be completed during the December 3 meeting, subsequent committee interactions via e-mail, and conference calls before the January 2011 meeting of the Tuning Oversight Council.

- *Mechanical Engineering Committee.* Online meetings were held August 19 and September 17; face-to-face meetings were held on July 30 and October 15 in conjunction with the full Oversight Council meetings.
  - The Mechanical Engineering Committee is making progress on the identification of baccalaureate-level outcomes for mechanical engineering graduates.
    - The Committee has completed the competency table with enhanced program-level outcomes based on ABET criteria A-K.
    - The Committee has nearly completed the identification of the level of competency (based on Bloom's taxonomy) for all of the program-level outcomes.
    - The Committee still has to complete work on the one-page descriptions for the outcomes.
    - The Committee will then make adjustments to the program-level outcomes once the employer, graduate, and student survey data are obtained.
- *Industrial Engineering Committee.* Two conference/video calls have been held during the report period, and a third is planned for December; face-to-face meetings were held on July 30 and October 15 in conjunction with the full Oversight Council meetings.
  - The Industrial Engineering Committee is progressing well on work toward completing the following five deliverables, with an estimated percentage completion level as noted. The team expects to have all work deliverables completed at the 90 percent level prior to the January meeting.
  - Definitions of industrial engineering competencies at various levels (80 percent complete):
    - Core competencies needed to enter higher education in civil engineering;
    - Pre-engineering competencies gained during first two years of study;
    - Baccalaureate-level engineering competencies; and
    - Post-graduate engineering competencies.
  - Key competencies profile of Industrial Engineering – schematic summary of the industrial engineering competency table (90 percent complete).
  - Industrial Engineering expertise profile lists many various engineering course work areas with a presentation of the various and unique areas of focus available towards the completion of a baccalaureate degree in industrial engineering (80 percent complete).
  - Industrial Engineering employment profile lists many various engineering employment fields and industry opportunities (80 percent complete).
  - Outcome title description pages for Industrial Engineering have been assigned and are due to be reviewed via conference call/video conference in December 2010 (50 percent complete).

*Student Surveys.* The student survey for community college students and the student survey for university students were finalized in Survey Monkey during the week of September 13, and they were released for student distribution on September 20. (Note: The student survey is identical for community college and university students with the exception of the cover memo.) Institutions having received Institution Review Board approval requested that students enrolled during the fall 2010 semester in the following courses complete the surveys:

- Community college students: Introduction to Engineering, Circuits, Dynamics, and Statics
- University students: Senior-level Design classes

As of November 10, 2010, 269 community college students and 261 university students have completed the student survey. Please see **Appendix E** for a copy of the survey and a synopsis of preliminary student survey results as compiled for the October 15 meeting of the Tuning Oversight Council for Engineering.

*Employer Surveys.* There has been much difficulty in securing actual employer contact information from Oversight Council members because members have expressed the concerns of their respective department chairs and deans that the employers of their engineering graduates are being over-surveyed and may be reluctant to complete surveys needed for ABET accreditation if the THECB conducts yet another survey. Nevertheless, the survey for employers of engineering graduates was finalized in Survey Monkey during the week of October 25, with individual collection sites created for each institution. (Through Survey Monkey, survey data will be compiled separately for each institution and collectively for the THECB.) It is believed that institutions will be more motivated to distribute requests to complete the employer survey if they distribute the link to the survey themselves and the institution is able to get individualized information from employers of their institution's graduates. Links to each individual survey were sent to specific institutions for distribution on November 1, 2010. To date, there have been 18 employer responses.

#### **Evaluation:**

Two local evaluators (Dr. Gary Hanson and Dr. Charlotte Biggerstaff) continue to coordinate the quantitative and qualitative evaluations. Given the nature of work to date, qualitative evaluations have been the focus of evaluator work during this reporting period. The Texas evaluators participate in monthly conference calls with SPEC Associates. Additionally, local evaluators have been attending face-to-face Tuning Meetings and the Regional Meetings, providing timely evaluation findings to help inform the work as it moves forward.

#### **Communication:**

As stated in the Initial Report, the THECB used the recommendations resulting from the series of focus groups with stakeholders conducted by Travis Reindl of CommunicationWorks to guide communication activities. Other activities outlined in the communications plan were described in the "Regional Meetings" and "Interim Committees and Legislative Briefings" sections for the first goal (pages 2-4) and under "Public Agenda" (page 4) and will not be repeated here.

#### **Learning:**

Changes made or planned in light of what staff have learned have been described in previous sections and will not be repeated here.

*Links with other Lumina grants.* 1) After consultation with Kevin Corcoran of Lumina, THECB staff will tune the discipline of History in 2012 (rather than 2011) so that this multi-state effort can be informed by the work of the American Historical Association. 2) As stated earlier in this report, Lumina is providing funding for Public Agenda to assist two Making Opportunity Affordable grantee states, and Texas has been selected as one of the states to receive this additional resource. With their assistance, Texas will be able to add the student voice regarding obstacles to and needed help for completion.

#### **Potential Changes in State Leadership:**

The THECB is fortunate to have the strong support of Governor Rick Perry in achieving both goals of this project. Governor Perry was re-elected on November 3, 2010.