

**ApplyTexas Advisory Committee Meeting Notes
December 5, 2016**

Members Present:

Candace Appleton-Kuntz—Texas Christian University
Melinda Carroll, Co-Chair—North Central Texas College
Margaret Dechant—Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi
Todd Fields—Collin County Community College District
Joy Frazier—The University of Texas at Arlington
Christine Gann—Sam Houston State University
Sheila Grey for Jamie Hansard—Texas Tech University
Nidia Arellano Hassan—Tyler Junior College
Lisa Hernandez—Angelo State University
Rebecca Lothringer, Co-Chair—University of North Texas
Pooja Mallipaddi—The University of Texas at Arlington (Student Representative)
Nichole Mancone—Tarrant County College
Mary Beth Marks—Sul Ross State University
Michelle Walker—Texas A&M University
Michael Washington—The University of Texas at Austin

Members Attending the Meeting via Telephone:

Melissa Gallien—Lamar University
Connie Garrick—Lone Star College System
Larry Barroso for Matthew Hebbard—South Texas College

Members Not Present:

Drew Canham—McLennan Community College
Nick Cioci—Lamar Institute of Technology
Vanessa Maldonado (for Whitney Carter)—Texas State Technical College
Scott Smiley—The University of Texas of the Permian Basin

Ex-Officio Members Present:

Tim Brace—ApplyTexas Technical Team
Pilar Janis—Brownsville ISD
Rebecca Kindschi—ApplyTexas Technical Team
David Muck—ApplyTexas Technical Team

CB and ApplyTexas Staff present:

Jane Caldwell—Coordinating Board
Diana Foose—Coordinating Board
Claudette Jenks—Coordinating Board

Welcome and Introductions

Co-Chair Rebecca Lothringer called the ApplyTexas Advisory Committee (ATAC) meeting to order and welcomed everyone. She then asked members to identify themselves and the institution they represent.

Review and Adoption of Minutes

Melinda Carroll then presented the minutes from the October 21, 2016 meeting. One minor change was made. A motion for adoption of the amended minutes was made by Christine Gann, was seconded by Joy Frazier, and was passed by the committee.

Discussion of Responses to Survey on Changing the Application Cycle Start Date

Members of the committee were provided three related tables – “Summary of Poll Results,” Summary of Open Ended Questions RE Change of Schedule,” and “Transition Question Feedback.” (See Appendices A, B, and C.) Co-Chair Rebecca Lothringer led this discussion.

Ms. Lothringer summarized the results.

- The majority of the respondents had supported changing the opening date of the ApplyTexas application cycle from August 1 to July 1. They also advocated that the change be made starting in July 1, 2017 for the 2018-19 application cycle;
- The majority indicated they would be able to accomplish the technical tasks in time for the earlier start, but that it would be important that they be informed of any changes for 2018-19 cycle as soon as possible.
- The majority of the respondents indicated they did not rely on the Workshop for training on how to prepare for the testing and opening of the application, but that April would be the best month for providing such training.
- The following are some of the points of discussion expressed about moving the opening date to July 1:
 - Students may be confused about which applications to complete, since applications will be open for two different years simultaneously. For example, in July and August 2017 students will have access to fall 2017 and fall 2018 applications. However, at present some institutions have multiple opening dates in a given term, and students successfully figure it out. Dynamic questions can be used to help with the selection.
 - High schools will not be open when the application cycle is initiated. Students will be unable to attain transcripts at that time. For some school districts, class ranks will not be available until August.
 - If a student wants to copy an application to another institution, the second institution might not yet be available. However, this is now a possibility. The student can go back and do the copy once the second school’s application opens.
 - Students will have more time to complete the admission application.
 - No institution will be required to open its applications on July 1; each can continue to use its current schedule. The change would enable those who wish to do so to open on July 1.

Ms. Gann asked whether high school counselors had been surveyed about the proposed change, and the answer was “no.” The timeline for making the change and implementing it for the 2018-19 cycle was too tight. We can anticipate some of their concerns, and perhaps help

address some of the issues. The committee members agreed that high school counselors need to be advised of the change.

Tim Brace indicated it would be possible for the ApplyTexas technical team to set things up for the change, but back off from doing it, if necessary. The problem would be the confusion this would likely cause institutions. Making a final decision today seemed the best course of action.

Ms. Lothringer asked if further discussion on this topic was desired. Hearing none, she asked the committee for a vote.

A vote was taken on the question of changing the opening date for ApplyTexas application cycles to July 1, starting with a July 1, 2017 opening date for the 2018-2019 application cycle. **The vote was unanimously in favor of the change.** Members present in person at the time of the vote included: Melinda Carroll, Rebecca Lothringer, Michelle Walker, Christine Gann, Mike Washington, Todd Fields, Nichole Mancone, Lisa Hernandez, Margaret Dechant, Pooja Malipaddi, Nidia Arellano Hassan, Joy Frazier and Mary Beth Marks. This represents a quorum, as the committee has 22 voting members. Two other voting members voted in favor for the action by telephone: Melissa Gann, and Connie Garrick.

The discussion turned to the issue of implementing the change.

- A notice will be sent to high school counselors, advising them of the change of opening dates to July 1.
 - It will indicate the committee's decision was based on results of a poll of participating institutions, and that the change will be in effect in July 1, 2017 for applications for Summer 2018, Fall 2018 and Spring 2019.
 - The notice will be sent out to the counselors:
 - Via a distribution list composed of emails of counselors currently with access to the Counselor Suite (Claudette Jenks of the THECB agreed to facilitate this);
 - Via a notice sent to Education Service Centers, asking them to distribute it to their regional counselors (Jane Caldwell of the THECB agreed to facilitate this); and
 - Via a notice shared with the TACAC listserv (Ms. Gann agreed to facilitate this).
 - The notice will include an invitation for counselors to identify things that might be done to ease the transition to this new schedule.
 - The first notice will be sent out as soon as possible.
 - A reminder will be sent out in mid-January.
 - Responses will be due by February 3.
 - A copy of the committee's draft notice is shown at the top of page 4 of these minutes.

- Mr. Brace agreed to get the word out to the technical vendors who currently serve Texas schools in the processing of admission data.

Notice to Counselors (Draft)

In November, a survey was sent to ApplyTexas participating institutions asking if they were interested in moving the ApplyTexas annual application start date from August 1 to July 1, starting in summer, 2017. Based on the responses to this survey, the ApplyTexas Advisory Committee has voted to allow institutions to make the ApplyTexas applications for the 2018-19 application cycle (Summer 2018, Fall 2018, and Spring 2019) available as early as July 1, 2017. Individual institutions will continue to have the option to open later than the July 1 official opening date.

We know that this change in schedule will also affect you and your students. How might we assist you in successfully making this change?

What outcomes do you think might affect the students and how may we partner in accommodating the transition?

We understand that this will be a transition and we ask for your patience during this change. Please submit your responses by Feb 3, 2017.

Discussion of Feedback from TACRAO "Hot Topics" Session

International Applicants and the 2-year Application. At the October 21 meeting two options were identified for providing 2-year institutions a fully functional application for international students – amend the 4-year international application so that 2-year schools can use it, or add an international 'module' to the 2-year app that would collect the information now missing. The need for improvements was brought up at the residency 'Hot Topic' session at the TACRAO meeting.

Nichole Mancone agreed to take the lead in pursuing this issue. Connie Garrick and Melinda Carroll agreed to assist. Mary Lemburg of Houston Community College had submitted a change request regarding an international application for 2-year institutions, and she will be invited to participate in the discussions.

- What additional information is needed?
 - In October, the following items were identified:
 - Whether IELTS was taken
 - Whether the student has or will take TOEFL
 - Expected source of financial support if you are, or will be in F-1 or J-1 status;
 - Personal or family funds
 - Government or private sponsor (give name of sponsor)
 - other (specify)
- How best can the additional information be acquired?
- Mr. Brace recommended the members of this workgroup go online and complete (but not submit) an international application, just to see how it works.

Dual Credit applicant questions. At present, some institutions use the US Freshman or 2-year application for admitting dual credit students. The consensus is that the applications require

students to report data not relevant to dual credit enrollment and/or fail to collect some of the needed data. How can the existing applications be improved to serve these students?

- How do we identify dual credit students?
- What information is needed to admit such students?

It was agreed to:

- send a copy of the US Freshman application to the committee members, asking them to:
 - identify the questions they require of dual credit students; and
 - identify any information that is needed, but not being collected;
- reach out to institutions that have their own dual credit applications, and ask them to share a copy with the committee; and
- discuss the results at the next meeting.

Discussion of Summer 2017 SPEEDE/EDI/ApplyTexas Workshop

The change in the opening date for the 2018-2019 cycle generates a need to consider rescheduling the SPEEDE/EDI/ApplyTexas Workshop (traditionally held in June).

Responses to the poll about moving the opening date to July 1 indicated (1) institutions want/need details of the changes as soon as possible, and (2) April would be the best month for hosting a training meeting.

The summer TACRAO meeting schedule (and contract with the hosting hotel) now includes a central day for ApplyTexas discussions. For Summer, 2017, this date would be July 19. This timing, however, does not accommodate the need for training for a July 1 opening date.

After discussion, the committee decided to look into the possibility of having an on-line workshop in April to cover technical issues (the SPEEDE/EDI) aspect of past workshops; and to use the July TACRAO meeting date to address ApplyTexas issues.

Michelle Walker agreed to reach out to Richard Jimmerson, who has coordinated efforts for the technical sessions at the workshop in the past, to see if this approach would be acceptable.

If the decision is to move in this direction, institutions will need to be notified as soon as possible. Should the notice come from the Coordinating Board or from ATAC?

Consideration of the Review of Proposed Changes to ApplyTexas Applications or Procedures

Before the discussion of proposals began, Jane Caldwell presented the committee with a copy of a draft "ApplyTexas Change Request" form (see page 6.) Members had suggestions for improving the form, and were asked to mark the changes they suggest on a copy of the form and send it to Jane. The revised form will be shared for further comment.

ApplyTexas Change Request

1. Requestor: (Name, Institution and Email Address)
2. Brief Description of Request: Please be as specific as possible; attach screenshots when appropriate.
3. Benefits of the Proposed Change: Attach additional pages as necessary.
4. Impact of Not Making Change:
5. Recommended Timeline for Change: Immediate, Next Application Cycle or Other. If Immediate, please explain. <input type="checkbox"/> Immediate <input type="checkbox"/> Next Application Cycle <input type="checkbox"/> Other
6. Applications Impacted: Check all that apply. <input type="checkbox"/> 2-year <input type="checkbox"/> US Freshman <input type="checkbox"/> Transfer <input type="checkbox"/> Readmit <input type="checkbox"/> International <input type="checkbox"/> Graduate <input type="checkbox"/> International Grad <input type="checkbox"/> Scholarship
FOR APPLYTEXAS USE ONLY: Size of Project <input type="checkbox"/> Small <input type="checkbox"/> Medium <input type="checkbox"/> Large
Date approved by ApplyTexas Advisory Committee: _____
Date approved by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board: _____

Tim Brace (ApplyTexas Team Manager) led the discussion about changes that have been proposed for the 2018-19 application cycle. The following list includes items raised earlier during the 2016-17 ApplyTexas Advisory Committee meetings and new items raised since the October 21, 2016 meeting.

1. Show all custom questions at once instead of one at a time. Project Type: Large. Although the value of simplifying this section for students is recognized, the complexity of the process caused the committee to agree to **leave it pending**.
2. Remove question in scholarship application about parental income. Project Type: Small. This item was **dropped from consideration** by the committee at its October meeting.
3. In residency questions, add "n/a" to parent visa question (currently some applicants choose "none of the above", which has a different meaning than "n/a" (not applicable)). **DONE.**
4. Parental education level questions: second parent can be "unknown or not applicable" for relationship. Project Type: Small. It would add consistency to the wording of questions related to parents. **This was approved by the committee in October.**
5. Update "father/mother" to "parent 1/parent 2" in scholarship application. Project Type: Small. **This was approved by the committee in October.**
6. Address deliverability. Project Type: Medium/Large. Involves the purchase of vendor service to confirm that mail can be delivered to the address provided by the applicant. An error message would be generated when the student "saved" the relevant page of the application. The members do not want an "undeliverable" status to keep a student from submitting an application. They also asked how this would be funded. The funds would come from the payments of participating institutions; there is a provision for "professional services" under which this could perhaps fall. It will generate no additional cost to the institutions. **Identified by the committee on December 5 as a high priority item for the 2018-19 cycle.**
7. Add text to translate legalese on some items. Project Type: Small. **Removed from list by technical team (the original source of the suggestion).** Will be brought to the committee for consideration if/when specific issues are identified.
8. Add CEEB codes for colleges to the EDI files. Project Type: **Withdrawn by requestor.**
9. Add word count to custom questions and scholarship short answers. **DONE**
10. Add deadlines for essays. Project Type: Medium. Suggestions were made to make the use of essay deadlines optional for institutions. It would have to be implemented as an additional field in the application set-up, and would allow different deadlines for different types of applications. **Was left pending by the committee due to higher priority on other proposed changes.**

11. Open application cycles later in the morning than 12:01 am. Project Type: Small. The committee agreed to the request to open at 10:00 on the first day of each application cycle.
12. Open the application cycle earlier [than August 1] next year. Project Type: Large. Adopted by committee. See notes on pages 2-4.
13. Have class course information and extra-curricular information be copied when applications are copied from one institution to another. Project Type: Small. Testing is underway, and the problem has not been replicated. Students can now copy these to other applications, but only if (1) this information was completed and saved in the original application, and; (2) the new institution has not opted out of collecting this information. Better instructions are needed for applicant at the starting point for copying the application.
14. Change wording in the confirmation page for institution charging a \$0 application fee to indicate no charge is levied, rather than wording that implies no decision has been made by the institution. Project Type: Small. This was approved by the committee in October. *An interest in expanding the options for listing charges (for instance, unique fee for dual credit students) was also discussed, but no action was taken.*
15. Require high school graduation dates for those who indicate they have or will have graduated from high school. Project Type: Small. Make HS graduation date mandatory, including for persons who complete a home-school HS program, and adjust the audit on this question so that it can reflect the graduation date for a person who graduates from high school even if he/she also completed a GED. Adopted by Committee as priority item at the December 5 meeting.
16. Give 2-year institutions the ability to break down the major sections into "colleges/schools" in a way similar to that available to 4-year institutions. Project Type: Small. The discussion indicated some confusion about whether this is already an option. This will be checked. Melinda Carroll also suggested that the 2-year major selection text use the term "program of study" rather than "college/school." The committee's conclusion was that institutions should be polled on this topic. Can the wording be improved to meet college needs, or is the only solution to make the labels customizable? Making it customizable is a medium-to-large project. More data needed. Left pending.
17. Share a list of administrative options for 4-year institutions with representatives of 2-year institutions. Project Type: Small. This would give 2-year institutions an opportunity to see if any of the unique 4-year options would be helpful to 2-year institutions. Two courses of action: (1) send the requestor a list of the options; (2) post information as FAQ in Administrative Suite. No programmatic changes to system at this time.
18. Clarify how students enrolling in dual credit or early college programs are to answer questions about college credit. Project Type: Small. The handling of dual credit residency questions is on hold until the CB legal office and/or Legislature has had an opportunity to meet and provide guidance. (Anticipated during the 85th Legislative Session, spring 2017.)

19. Correct listing to show "Change year of service..." on extracurricular activity/community/volunteer and employment page from a text question to pull-down box. Project Type: Small. **This was approved by the committee in October.**
20. Add respondent name and email as optional items on the application survey. Project Type: Small. **DONE.**
21. Confirm with committee that the essay word limits added to the 2017-18 applications are meeting their needs. Project Type: Small. Mike Washington admitted that The University of Texas at Austin has found the lower limit of 350 words to be too low. Their goal is to receive essays that are approximately 1 1/2 pages long. The decision of the committee was to increase the recommendations from 350-500 with a suggested maximum of 650 words to a recommendations of 500-750 words with no maximum requirement. **DONE.**
22. Investigate extracurricular/volunteer/awards section for ways to make it easier to complete. Project Type: Small/Medium. Fifty percent of the application survey respondents indicated this was the hardest section of the application. **Watch and see; poll survey completers who raise this issue.**
23. Make test scores page optional for schools that do not require that information for their admissions decisions. Project Type: Medium. Consider making test page optional for the colleges. **Supported by committee members, but left pending due to other priorities.**
24. New. ApplyTexas graduate applications are listed in the undergraduate admissions page. Please remove them. Project Type: **Adopted by Committee as priority item at the December 5 meeting.**
25. New. Clarify language RE availability of graduate application so that student can tell whether the application exists for the institution he/she chooses, but is not yet open, or that the institution does not use the ApplyTexas graduate application. Project Type: S. **No formal action taken. Advise the institution to contact the AT help desk.**
26. New. Make first residency question clearer. **The handling of residency questions is on hold until the Legislature has had an opportunity to meet and provide guidance. (Anticipated during the 85th Legislative Session, Spring 2017.)** No action taken.
27. New. Add English as one of the listed languages spoken fluently. In which applications should this change be made? If it is presented as a drop-down box, adding English would be easy. **More information needed. No action at this time.**
28. New. Remove scholarship question that asks where else the student is applying for scholarships and if the application in hand is for the first choice school. Question is slightly different – asks for top 5 institution preferences to which the student is applying. Suggestion: Poll scholarship app users about their need of the question.

29. New. Provide students more information about which application to complete. There is confusion. (Is the “grad” app for those who graduated from high school? ...those who completed an associate’s degree???) Suggestion was to move instructions of the uses of the applications to the front of the process of completing an app, so the student can move to the correct form before wasting too much time on the wrong one. (Having the information as an FAQ is not enough. Too few applicants look at the FAQs.) **ApplyTexas technical team needs guidance on how to improve the instructions.**
30. New. Ask whether the applicant has ever been expelled, dismissed, suspended, etc., and provide space for explanation. Conclusion was that it is best to have the school collect this information via a custom question, rather than forcing each school to choose yes/no to collect the information. **For now, leave as custom question.** Would be interesting to search all the custom questions to identify pattern of asking for this information (or not).
31. New. Enable institutions to opt out of asking question about applying for fee waivers. In the past, the request to eliminate the question has been denied. **Decision was to leave things as they are – continue addressing this through custom questions. Also, add information to the effect that “all institutions do not offer fee waivers” to the statement that a waiver is based on meeting certain criteria; documentation must be provided.**
32. Basically, the same as request 17 – to improve the international application for 2-year institutions. Difficulty: Large. **Committee agreed to make this a priority item.** See discussion on page 4 of these minutes.
33. New. Add question to Re-admit application that will enable schools to know applicant’s intention for re-enrolling. Conclusion was to add a question about student intent that lets the applicant choose one of the following: complete a baccalaureate; seek a second baccalaureate; enroll as a non-degree seeker; other. **However, no action is to be taken at this time; other projects are to be given priority.**
34. New. Reduce number of times a student has to write in his/her address. When completing supplemental parent information section, import the parents’ address information into the student’s cells if the student has indicated he/she lives with his/her parents. Difficulty: Medium. **No action at this time. Need to resolve how to handle situations when address is changed.**
35. New. Add a questions that will help institutions identify students who are foster care youth that they the students may be advised of available aid and services. There is strong support of this in the Legislature. Jane agreed to work with Department of Family and Protective Services and the Supreme Court of Texas Children’s Commission to develop the appropriate wording. Add to US Freshman and 2-year app at first; add to other apps as soon as possible. Difficulty: M. **Committee agreed to make this a priority item.**
36. New. Expand the list of data elements sent to the colleges. Add transfer credit hours, parent education information, HS graduation date, high schools and colleges attended and dates to/from for all applications submitted at a given time. **Committee agreed to make this a priority item.**

37. New. Expand the list of data elements sent to the colleges. Add all custom questions. **Left pending due to other priorities.**
38. New. Update email sent to students when they submit applications, to include information about the timeline for the data reaching the schools. Suggested wording was: Your application will be sent to the above school in the next two working days, and there may be subsequent overnight processes necessary at your target institution before they are able to contact you. Please also keep in mind that weekends and holidays may further delay this communication. **Adopted as a priority item by the committee.**
39. New. Do not send institutions negative income numbers. Convert them to zeroes. **Adopted as a priority item by the committee.**

The majority of the proposed changes were small in nature and could be implemented by the technical team. There were 12 remaining items that the committee was asked to prioritize. Committee members present at this point in the meeting unanimously approved the items listed below in bold type.

- **Item 6** – Large project – Address deliverability

Beginning at this point in time, there was no longer a quorum of committee members present (in person or by telephone). Ten of the committee's 22 members were present (in person or by telephone) at the time of the following decisions. They included:

Melinda Carroll	Rebecca Lothringer	Candace Appleton-Kuntz	
Todd Fields	Nichole Mancone	Joy Frazier	
Melissa Gallien	Michelle Walker	Connie Carrick	Mike Washington

- **Item 15** – Small project – Correct audits of GED/HS graduate questions
- **Item 24** – Small project – Remove grad application references in undergrad app list
- **Item 32** – Large project – improve the 2-year app for international students
- **Item 35** – Medium project – Add question to identify Foster Care applicants
- **Item 36** – Small project – add certain fields to the institution download file
- **Item 38** – Small project – Update email sent students when they submit apps¹
- **Item 39** – Small project – Have system replace negative income numbers with zeroes

The other four items were left pending for future consideration:

- Item 10 – Medium project – Optional deadlines for essays
- Item 23 – Medium project – Make test scores page optional for institutions
- Item 33 – Medium project – Add question to identify Re-admit students' intent
- Item 34 – Medium project – Auto-fill student address to Supplemental Parent page
- Item 37 – Medium-to-Large project – include custom question data in inst. Downloads

The list of items will be shared with members who were there at the beginning of the meeting but who had to leave before the vote was taken. Final committee recommendations will be based on the total vote of the committee.

¹ It was later determined that this was a minor text change and did not have to be prioritized.

Next Meeting

The committee agreed to have its next meeting on Tuesday, February 28, 2017, beginning at 9:00 am. Among the things to be discussed at that time are:

- High school counselor responses RE the change in the ApplyTexas cycle start date;
- Report from the THECB on how to engage high schools (mentioned by Jerel in October as an alternative to having workgroups);
- Questions to be included in the applications (or skipped) by students applying for dual credit courses;
- Plans for an April "virtual" meeting for technical training for the 2018-19 cycle and a July TACRAO presentation on ApplyTexas content changes

Adjourn

After concluding the current meeting's work was complete, the Co-Chairs asked for a motion to adjourn. The motion was voiced by Michelle Walker and seconded by Todd Fields.