Apply Texas Advisory Committee Meeting Notes
October 27, 2017

Members Present
  Kevin Davis—Stephen F. Austin State University
  Chryssa Delgado—Texas A&M University-San Antonio
  Dana Fields—Houston Community College
  Deborah Gilchrist—The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley
  Rebecca Lothringer—University of North Texas
  Pooja Mallipaddi—The University of Texas at Arlington *(Student Representative)*
  Kerri Mikulik—Angelo State University (*representing Lisa Hernandez*)
  Jennifer Waits—Tarrant County College (*representing Nichole Mancone*)
  Michelle Walker—Texas A&M University

Members Attending via Telephone
  Larry Barroso—South Texas College
  Jennifer Beal—North Central Texas College
  Vanessa Maldonado—Texas State Technical College
  Scott Smiley—The University of Texas of the Permian Basin

Guest/Other Attendees
  Derick Hutchison—Houston ISD
  Michael Washington—The University of Texas at Austin

Members Not Present
  Melinda Carroll—North Central Texas College
  Todd Fields—Collin County Community College District
  Carey Rose—Temple College
  Angie Taylor—Sam Houston State University

Apply Texas Technical Team Members Present
  Tim Brace, ApplyTexas Technical Team Manager
  Rebecca Kindschi
  David Muck
  Monique Murphy

Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board Staff Present
  Jerel Booker
  Diana Foose
  Claudette Jenks
  Raul Jaimes

A. Welcome and Introductions

Rebecca, Committee Co-Chair, called the meeting to order. New committee members were introduced. Rebecca announced that there is quorum to conduct business.

B. Review and Adoption of Minutes

The minutes from the February 28, 2017 meeting were reviewed by the committee. Minutes approved.

C. Selection of 2-Year Institution Co-Chair for 2017-18 and 2018-19 Academic Years

Rebecca moved to elect a new co-chair from a two-year institution and reviewed the requirements. Dana Fields, Houston Community College agreed to serve as the new 2-year co-chair for the next two years. Rebecca motioned to approve, Deborah seconded. Committee approved.

D. Discussion/Update from Technical Team

Tim led the discussion with the list from the ATAC Fall Meeting 2017 which included requests that came up last academic year, were not installed and pending further review, or were wanted but not prioritized. Tim reminded the committee that ApplyTX is moving all database infrastructure to a new mainframe, Amazon web services, over the next couple years. During this time, UT and committee should continue considering requests, defer large requests, and after move, there will be more opportunities for some enhancements. Requests should be limited to let the UT Technical team work on the transition. Rebecca reminded the committee that recommendations for changes are usually through December 1, then the committee decides on what is prioritized. In the spring the Technical Team works through the changes. Claudette shared that urgent requests should take top priority; these include those that are being pushed by legislature or mandated.

See attached Technical Team Report.

E. Lunch - Rebecca called to break for lunch, committee returned at 1:00 PM.

F. Discussion and Consideration of Proposed Changes to Apply Texas Forms or Procedures

a. Revisit question regarding foster care

Jerel revisited the discussion from the last meeting regarding the addition of a question that will help institutions identify foster care youth. The intent is to advise students of available aid and services. This item was tabled at last meeting with reservations. Jerel said the Coordinating Board will be able to collect how many foster students actually apply. Rebecca recommended the committee consider where we put it on the application. Jerel said once the information is collected there will be an ability to mass text and send information to students. Deborah suggested to reword the question so it doesn't imply that the student is applying for assistance. Claudette will go back to the requesting party to revise the language.

Rebecca revisited the prior recommendation regarding an opt-in for research but it sounded more as opt in for communications. Jerel stated we have language in the app to

contact the applicant for research or inform of other educational resources. The current language is not strong enough and would need to better comply with FERPA and state laws. Tim said changes to text is simple and can be done anytime. (see more discussion in Technical Report)

Rebecca motioned to approve the two items, first change in wording for the Coordinating Board to be able to collect and utilize the information, secondly for the foster care question with edits, once edits re-approved, the question will be added to the application. Michelle seconds motion. Committee approved.

b. Other change requests for consideration
Rebecca reviewed new request forms for technical advancements to Apply Texas.

Request #1: Michelle requested to add preferred name to the application as a new Deborah agreed to include this field. Tim said it is not a large project, sent to EDI as preferred name, and will be on all apps type and will come up with concise text that is clear to the student. Rebecca asked for a motion to move forward to approve on the preferred name change. Michelle motioned, Committee Member second. Committee approved.

Request #2: Michelle requested review of essay topics and suggested the committee take a different track for the committee to come up with one topic that is consistent. She recommended to have a general question, keep Topic A, and make other topics customizable by the institution. Rebecca said one of the concerns was from the public schools, that students often times start working on essays in advance. Michelle said more than likely individual institutions would determine a schedule for establishing their essay questions. Audience member, Mike Washington, University of Texas also asked about a custom essay. Audience member, Derick Hutchison with Houston ISD, said students look at essays as early as freshmen year to start practicing writing but don't start until spring of Junior year and roll into their senior year. Tim and Claudette said they receive inquiries about the essays often. Michelle suggested the opportunity for one customizable essay. Rebecca asked if there was a way to adopt the essay question that is needed as one of the essay options and suggested looking at other essay prompts from other applications.

Committee discussed timing of considering new essays for next cycle. It is recommended to keep it standard for the students, counselors, and the teachers to be able know the essays being requested by any institution. Deborah suggested leaving them as is for now.

Kevin anyone having problems with their EDI if they receive an essay coming through. Deborah said students can submit an app without an essay, asks if there's an option an institution can have where a student can't submit an app without the essay. David Muck clarified scholarships require the essay and submit them at the same time. Rebecca asked if it can be set up for one institution and not the other. David said that is possible. Michelle said some schools require essay attached to app some don't. David Muck, adding a line of text on the essay will help knowing if essay is required with app or not. Tim said you can make essay deadline as app, it doesn't stop either one from being submitted when completed with both. David said you can submit the app without finishing the essay and then come back.

Pooja Mallipaddi asked if this is mentioned in the application, that essay and app have two separate deadlines, or do counselors notify the students. Michelle explained TAMU has put in two different deadlines. Rebecca confirmed this message is on the app. Michelle said for their purposes they prefer not to slow down the submission of the app, if they had the option they would not choose to hold the app for the essays. Rebecca recommended UT-Austin and Texas A&M look into what essay questions would benefit their needs, bring back essay topics to be submitted to committee to review for next cycle.

Request #3: Deborah asked, regarding the passing of HB 1508, to consider adding a notification on the app so the student can be informed about the licenses. Michelle said they added this as a custom question to their app. Rebecca said it only applies to certificate programs, not all universities have certificate programs. Michelle said it applies to any degree that leads to a license. Deborah said it applies to everybody. Rebecca asked Michelle to share her custom question for the committee to consider.

Kevin asked the committee if they use two majors, and is it possible to opt out of selecting the second major. Rebecca said ApplyTexas has a dropdown, you choose your first major then you choose your second major. Deborah said they don't load the second one. Kevin said custom questions to load minors and the minors are crossing over because they have a second major. If no one is using it should go away. Committee members said they use it. Rebecca said it's used when a student is not accepted into their first program. Scott said the way you can opt out of the second major is to have it listed by school, if you alphabetize it, it does come in with both majors. Rebecca Kindschi said there is an opt out for the second choice school; there's not a way to opt out of the second choice major if you don't use schools. Kevin said they alphabetize and that would be the difference. Rebecca Kindschi said doesn't matter whether you alphabetize, only if you have schools. David Muck, we'll look into seeing if we can tie these two together.

Request #4: Michelle requested adding to the freshmen application were students self-report grades, courses, and level of the course, referring to all the courses in senior year. Rebecca asked if this could be done by looking at transcript, instead of having the student re-write everything from a transcript. Michelle said to consider feasibility considering the number of transcripts they receive. Derick Hutchison said they currently do this with common app schools, it's not an easy process for counselors and students.

Michelle asked audience member Michael Washington with University of Texas at Austin, how their forms look (response could not be transcribed due to poor audio recording). Michelle said the benefit is the university could get all the information they'll need to consider a student for admission in the application, if they self-report grades, without having to wait on the transcript. Jerel said in order for a student to complete it, the student ideally would have a copy of their transcript to complete it. Michelle agreed. Jerel said students still have to wait on transcripts. Claudette said a counselor or someone has to be able to provide the information to the student. Michelle thought a student could download; can students not get a hold of an un-official transcript themselves and view their history? Derick Hutchison; yes, they have access to their course history. Claudette noted that each district has different portals they are not all the same, small districts may

not have a system. Vanessa Maldonado said San Antonio is the same way and actually, students have to pay for transcripts in most cases.

Kerri suggested using TREx to pull the transcript information. Michelle said not many schools are not using it. Michelle asked if there was a way to get all the high schools in Texas to use TREx as mandated. Jerel said he and Claudette will look into this request, the committee should think about how institutions would benefit for making this change.

Request #5: Kevin asked to move gender from page one to page two, would like gender to get back to page one. Technical team will review.

G. Discussion of potential agenda items and next meeting date
Rebecca asked that any additional items to be discussed at next meeting be submitted to Claudette and Diana. The next meeting date was not determine due to scheduling conflicts. Claudette will look into potential dates for next meeting and send a notification.

H. <u>Adjournment</u>
Rebecca asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Pooja seconded. Committee adjourned.

ApplyTexas Technical Team Report

Tim Brace, ApplyTexas Technical Team Manager, led the discussion on changes that have been proposed for the 2019-2020 application cycle. Below is a list of items to consider.

1. 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. Claudette asked committee to continue to place this item on hold, there are many legal concerns, so will table it for now. Jerel said there were a number of committees and taskforces dealing with dual credit now with a number of things that need to be sorted out. (Anticipated during the 85th Legislative Session, spring 2017.) <mark>On Hold.</mark>

2. 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. There was not much feedback from the committee, so set aside. <mark>Pending due to other priorities, Tech team not confident it will get to this for this cycle.</mark>

3. New. Ask whether the applicant has ever been expelled, dismissed, suspended, etc., and provide space for explanation. This question addresses issues about student conduct as opposed to academic restrictions. 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. <mark>For now, leave as custom question.</mark>

   Michelle indicated that TAMU would like to see a question on the transfer app and perhaps on the re-admit app. Michelle asks if there was any recommendation in the legislative session about this. Jerel recalled that this came up was over safety, meaning a student coming from one institution to another and committing a criminal act. He was not aware of finalized legislation but will check. Deborah indicated that this is on some of the transcripts. Kevin agreed saying that some transcripts indicate "suspended for disciplinary reasons". Michelle explained TAMU registrar said that the notations may be there regarding disciplinary suspension but they drop off the transcript; so the transcript is not reliable. Committee discussed if this is required on the transcript. Deborah said that perhaps it was not required, but the requirement is that the dean of students notify the registrar if they are aware of such actions. Other institutions considered adding this also. Rebecca indicated that when they receive a transcript with this information provided (e.g. suspended due to disciplinary action), the institution has a responsibility to act on the information; if something happens with that student on your campus and you had that information, what happens. Michelle said this is why TAMU wanted to see it on the app because it is not consistent on the transcript. She wanted to seek committee feedback to include in the common portion of the app because of the movement in response to safety – placing it on the app, then developing a process for addressing it. The transcript is less reliable and comes later than the app and may come after admitting a student, TAMU thought the app was more appropriate.

   Tim said if added to the app, it has be a question with a standardized number of answers and everyone knows what those mean. This may or may not get at exactly what the

college wants. Other committee members agreed that it should remain a custom question for now. Claudette asked whether the student would be honest in answering the question. Rebecca agreed and said that when they had that question at UNT (they have since removed it), freshmen and international students at a high percentage would answer the question incorrectly and have to have interviews and fill out paperwork, then be processed for admission. Jerel recommended that colleges speak to their legal counsel to know what information they want to have moving forward on this issue in light its importance. The bill did not pass from his understanding but this does not mean that it was not amended to something else. Tim said they would leave it as a custom question for now.

4. New. <u>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.</u> There is strong support of this in the Legislature. THECB is working 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: Medium. See discussion in Item F. <mark>Rebecca motioned to approve, Michelle seconded motion. Committee approved</mark>.

5. New. <u>Expand the list of data elements in the download.</u> 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. <mark>Committee agreed to make this a priority item.</mark>

Tim said many elements can be downloaded on the app and there was support for adding this, it can be done at any time. The issue with the current infrastructure is how much data can be pushed back and forth at any one time. Tim asked if there was support for this and whether they used that download or if the fields would be useful especially if the college was not able to bring down as many apps at a time. Deborah asked what it meant, "not being able to bring back (returned) as many apps at a time". David Muck said that now on the downloadable spreadsheet, you can bring back a total of 7,000 or 9,000 buckets of data and 30 apps at a time. The more data added to each bucket, the fewer apps they can bring back in each bucket and the fewer total apps. If we add the data elements Tim mentioned, that would half the total number of apps that can be downloaded. Tim said it comes out to how it is used. If you are looking at a few apps at a time, it's fine. It you are using it to review thousands of apps at a time, it would mean that you would not be able to get them all back in one spreadsheet. Rebecca clarified that this would not affect the download process. Tim agreed that this is part of reporting functionality in the admin site.

David suggested that the way around this is to request date ranges. "I want submitted within this data range" get that download and then do a second request, you will have two separate spreadsheets. Tim said that a college might actually have several spreadsheets depending on how many apps and what they need. But some schools would like all the data in the app as a download functionality. It may be something to look at in the future as we look at a new system, but there are limitations now. Tim indicated that these data elements were specifically requested by one or more than one of the committee members last year. David noted that if there was demand for those elements, he recommended the second option, which would be a completely different download so that there is no altering of the existing download.

One added functionality is in the admin site where you see a percent change in the semester of the previous cycle at the current time. If a search for fall 2018, it would show how many apps have been saved and submitted and it would have a percent figure next to it comparing it to the reporting date of that same semester last year. So it would not be all of 2017, but only up to the year to date. Useful to see how you are doing this year verses last year. This is updated on Saturday each week, which means it is fresh data compared to data at this time last year.

Tim addressed other items for consideration from prior meetings.

6. Add School District code (HS graduating from) to the EDI, for two year schools to use.
   Discussed last year, but the request came in after we went live with the new cycle.
   The request was to send the school district code in the EDI with the application, which would be helpful for tuition purposes for the two-year schools. Jennifer noted that a direct import would help colleges with dual credit student applicants and to know which of college has MOU with ISD or not, the TEA code will be helpful. Kevin motion, Deborah seconded. Committee approved.

7. Partial data saves on XCurric page (counselor request, more than once)
   Tim discussed partial data saves, extracurricular page receives plenty of feedback from counselors and students. Technical Team would like to work on this and they are assessing now. There are some complexities; Technical Team wants to save what is there without too much auditing of the page. Kevin motion, Deborah seconded. Committee approved.

8. App type specific last update info (Tx State via request form)
   Current system does not know one page from another, the last update is the last update for all pages, regardless of app type. This would not be a trivial change. Not approved by committee as a priority.

9. App type specific fee waiver message (Tx State via request form)
   Tim said currently fee waiver message is not app specific, the request is to make them app type specific. Michelle said they handle this with the custom question, app specific. David said this currently applies to all apps. This is not a small change. Tim will follow up with the requester to get clarification on this request.

10. Customize the order in which the deadlines appear for the applicants
    Currently, regular deadline appears first, and optional deadlines appear in that order (1,2,3). The request was for these to appear in date order. Rebecca indicated that they could force everybody into date order, but how would affect deadlines if there is not alternative deadlines. Michelle said she was hesitant to mandate one or the other because she is not sure how it would work at other schools. Jennifer said they could make date order work. Claudette agreed that it would be confusing for a student either way. Rebecca asked if date order as the dates go by will those deadlines fall off. Rebecca Kindschi said the deadlines do fall off now if the deadline has passed. David said there's functionality on the app if deadline is selected and a student misses that deadline the app will prompt them, if there's another later deadline available. Committee agreed, it should be mandatory to all institutions.

11. Remove outdated info from the scholarship app (TAMU)
    There is some outdated info in the scholarship app regarding National Achievement Competition, competition was discontinued. Tim said the team will remove the outdated information from the scholarship app. Kevin motion, Deborah seconded. Committee approved.

12. Don't require the "title" field on supplemental parental info (TAMU)
    Rebecca said there is usefulness of having the title field and Michelle said making it optional would be appropriate. Tim said this can be done easily. Tech team will review the titles to see if all possibilities are covered. Committee supported leaving this. Will revisit at next meeting.

13. Require phone # on emergency contact info (TAMU)
    Tim share the request regarding the phone number be required on emergency contact information; now, it is not. Allow all 0. Currently we require either phone, email, or address. Tech team will review. Kevin motion, Deborah seconded. Committee approved.

14. Adding a question about releasing information for research (THECB)
    Jerel requested adding a question for a student to acknowledge that application data could be used in research. He noted that there is a passage on our app that informs the student that an authorized representative has permission to contact you regarding your app for outreach purposes; this needs to be updated. Dr. Brace, a separate section that would have its own kind of acknowledgement or imbedded the text in acknowledgment that may be already there. Jerel said that legal should write the language, add social media into the language, and have a "yes" or "no". See Item F for more discussion. Rebecca motioned to approve, Michelle seconded motion. Committee approved.

15. Adding ability to remove options for check or money order or fee waiver (Lamar)
    There was a request from Lamar University for limiting payment options to credit cards. Rebecca asked how many would opt out of certain payment options. Rebecca said Technical Team can look into the two options. Michelle said this could be addressed in a custom question. Tim suggested the credit card option be set up for schools that need that option. Tim said customize the order deadlines that appear for applicants. David indicated that the deadline appears first, and requested to enable the deadlines to appear in date order. Jennifer said this would help with their population of students. The Technical team would like to know how many schools want this; they can "hard code" a few schools in, which is easier than making it an option for everyone. Our suggestion: let schools who want to only allow credit cards to contact ApplyTexas and they'll customize for them. NOTE: allowing only credit cards could have a negative impact on applicants' ability to finish and submit applications.

Items completed:
Add % change to admin site app counts DONE
Creating a document applicants can see that lists all the opening dates for our institutions DONE