



**THECB Contact: Kelly Carper Polden**  
External Relations  
Kelly.polden@thecb.state.tx.us  
Office: (512) 427-6119  
Cell: (541) 531-3105



**AT&T Contact: Mona Taylor**  
512 633-4708  
mtaylor@rosscomm.com

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1200 East Anderson Lane • PO Box 12788, Austin, Texas 78711-2788 • [www.thecb.state.tx.us](http://www.thecb.state.tx.us)

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**AT&T SEEDS EXPANSION OF TEXAS AFFORDABLE BACCALAUREATE PROGRAM  
WITH \$400,000 CONTRIBUTION TO COLLEGE FOR ALL TEXANS FOUNDATION**

***Innovative Program to Expand to 10 Campuses, Puts Higher Education  
Within Reach for More Than 21,000 Texas Students***

**AUSTIN, TEXAS, Jan. 20, 2016** — AT&T Texas President Dave Nichols, Texas State Comptroller Glenn Hegar and Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) Chairman Bobby Jenkins today announced the expansion of the state's Texas Affordable Baccalaureate (TAB) program with a \$400,000 contribution to the THECB's College of All Texans Foundation.

The TAB program aims to decrease both the cost and time required to earn a degree by leveraging competency-based education, online and hybrid instruction models and alternative tuition structures. To date, AT&T has supported the College for All Texans Foundation with \$1.2 million in funding. This latest contribution will help expand the TAB program from two to 10 campuses, reaching more than 21,000 students over the first five years.

"The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board's approach to higher education is an innovative model, a force for positive change and is a model that aligns with our AT&T Aspire program's focus on creating new educational pathways to careers," Nichols said. "With our most recent contribution to College for All Texans Foundation, we're affirming our commitment to higher education. We recognize that for AT&T and our state to remain competitive and be able to meet workforce demands, we must graduate more Texans with degrees."

Presently the TAB program is available at two campuses in Texas: Texas A&M University Commerce (TAMU-C) and South Texas College (STC). The expanded program will reach additional students across the state as institutions compete for seed funding.

"What the TAB program seeks to accomplish is to turn 'stop-outs' or 'drop outs' into college graduates," Hegar said. "Success in these efforts will not only help Texas achieve the state's 60X30TX goals but will also help put non-traditional students on the pathway toward higher education success. Texas intends to provide high-quality higher education that is accessible and affordable."

Students entering the TAB program without prior credit should be able to complete their degree in three years for \$15,000 or less.

*More*

“Expansion of the TAB program is a key to achieving the state’s 60X30TX higher education goals for completion, marketable skills, managing student debt, and ensuring that at least 60 percent of Texans ages 25-34 will have a college degree or certificate by 2030,” Jenkins said. “Through the AT&T’s generosity, Texas institutions will be able to serve more students with high quality, affordable and attainable degrees that are closely tied to current workforce needs. And, most importantly, the TAB program with its competency-based model allows our institutions to serve the non-traditional students that are the new majority in higher education, such as military veterans, older, working students and Texans with some prior college credit but no degree.”

A significant component of the TAB program is its reliance on competency-based education (CBE), wherein learning is fixed while time is variable. Jenkins noted that CBE allows students to complete a larger number of curricular units in a shorter time period, depending on their demonstrated, preexisting knowledge and skills.

Non-traditional students include people like Scott Noffsinger, 52, a senior storage administrator with AT&T. Noffsinger is one of the initial 65 graduates of the TAB program, completing his BAAS in Organizational Leadership at TAMU-C in 2015, in less than two years.

“Three of my four children were enrolled in college studies and encouraged me to complete my degree,” said Noffsinger. “I had taken a number of college courses over the years but never managed to juggle work and family responsibilities against what traditional college programs demanded. I’m grateful for the TAB program and am already looking ahead to graduate studies to further advance my career.”

In 2014, 3.1 million Texans age 25-64 had some college but no degree, according to statistics from the THECB. Among these students, nearly 200,000 attempted 50 or more college credit hours at Texas’ public institutions between 2009 and 2013, but never earned a credential. Jenkins acknowledges these so-called “stop outs” are a key demographic in the state’s plan to fast track college education for more Texans.

There are currently more than 300 students enrolled in the TAB program at STC and TAMU-C. The additional funding from AT&T will allow the program to reach more students across the state with additional TAB degree programs funded through the expansion grants.

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#### **THECB Mission Statement**

*The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board promotes access, affordability, quality, success, and cost efficiency in the state’s institutions of higher education, through Closing the Gaps and its successor plan, resulting in a globally competent workforce that positions Texas as an international leader in an increasingly complex world economy.*

#### **THECB Mission Statement**

*The College for All Texans Foundation is a non-profit 501(c)(3) support organization for the [Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board \(THECB\)](#) in raising awareness and financial support for the state’s higher education plan – 60x30TX.*

#### **About AT&T**

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