

Legislative Update



A Publication of the **TEXAS COMMUNITY COLLEGE TEACHERS ASSOCIATION**
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83rd Session Offers Mixed Results

The 2013 Regular Session produced a number of notable results for community and technical college educators.

Instructional formula funding for two-year schools increased significantly, from \$868 million to \$883 million for the next biennium (2014-15).

However, sudden declines in contact hour enrollment at many colleges precluded a larger increase. Most observers attribute the dip to the booming energy industry in Texas, which has lured many potential students into the workforce. Tuition increases and reductions in student aid in recent years also likely contributed to the drop.

“Success Points” Enter Funding Calculations

Of particular interest to community college faculty members is the plan by lawmakers to implement a regimen of outcomes-based funding. Absent a seismic change in future Sessions, the new policy represents the paradigm of the future.

So far the amount of revenue at stake is (eventually) ten percent of the instructional formula, based at present completely on prior enrollments and associated program costs.

The appropriations bill passed by the Legislature contains a broad outline for outcomes-based funding for higher education, to be phased in over several years.

The first step is intended to establish a baseline for subsequent distribution of revenue. Schools and the Coordinating Board “shall jointly develop recommendations for an allocation system for student success points for the 2016-17 biennium,” according to the bill.

Metrics developed previously by the Texas Association of Community Colleges were adopted in the measure. Ten percent of funding for fiscal years 2016-17 will be allocated according to stipulated thresholds of student achievement. Language appended to the bill explicitly refers to an intent to create a funding mechanism that allows colleges to compete against themselves, rather than each other.

Ten percent of formula funding is to be allocated based on each college’s points earned from a three-year average of student completion of these metrics:

- Student successfully completes developmental education in mathematics: 1.0 point
- Student successfully completes developmental education in reading: 0.5 point
- Student successfully completes developmental education in writing: 0.5 point
- Student completes first college-level mathematics course with a grade of “C” or better: 1.0 point
- Student completes first college-level course designated as reading intensive with a grade of “C” or better: 0.5 point
- Student completes first college-level course designated as writing intensive with a grade of “C” or better: 0.5 point
- Student successfully completes first 15 semester credit hours at the institution: 1.0 point
- Student successfully completes first 30 semester credit hours at the institution: 1.0 point
- Student transfers to a General Academic Institution after successfully completing at least 15 semester credit hours at the institution: 2.0 points
- Student receives from the institution an associate’s degree, a Bachelor’s degree, or a certificate recognized for this purpose by the Coordinating Board in a field other than Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM), or Allied Health: 2.0 points
- Student receives from the institution an

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What You Can Do

by **Beaman Floyd**
TCCTA Lobbyist



The recent Regular Session, as you will note on these pages, produced some significant changes.

Most notable is the forthcoming advent of outcomes-based funding for community colleges. TCCTA opposed this concept in testimony, and I pointed out to one committee that faculty members are the principal guardians of standards and academic integrity, and we are concerned about the unintended consequences of such a plan. It is TCCTA’s position that it’s about *rigor*—an essential component of a college education.

During the interim between Sessions, your association will continue to stress the importance of academic integrity as the new policy is implemented. While outcomes-based funding is “sweeping the country,” as one policy maker put it, I believe we represent a constructive force in making sure our students receive the education they, and our citizens, deserve.

When visiting with clients, I am often asked, “What can I do?”

First, you can join TCCTA. Your association is respected in Austin, and policy makers pay attention when your professional voices speak in unison, from every campus—and legislative district—in Texas.

Next, get informed. Pay attention to our communications and contribute to the discussion on the “Blog” feature of the Web site.

Third, get to know your legislators while they are “at home.” Invite your representative and senator to visit your campus, ideally in a joint meeting with faculty, administration, and board members. It’s always impressive when all stakeholders are on the same page.

Finally, participate in TCCTA events—especially the Fall Conference for Faculty Leaders and the Annual Convention. I hope to see you there!

Plan Now to Attend
TCCTA Conference for
Faculty Leaders
October 11-12
Marriott Hotel South, Austin

