



TEXAS HIGHER EDUCATION COORDINATING BOARD

Academic Affairs and Research

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TEXAS UPDATE

National Council of State Directors of Community Colleges
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Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board Restructured

Under Commissioner Raymund Paredes' leadership, the THECB reorganized in 2005 to reflect the four goals of *Closing the Gaps* (CTG), Texas' higher education initiative. The goals are Participation, Success, Excellence, and Research. The Participation and Success Division creates and implements activities related to increasing numbers of students in higher education from underrepresented groups, especially first generation students. This includes outreach and recruitment efforts, student financial aid programs, and all activities designed to create a college-going culture, such as the use of P-16 Councils and vertical teams to align curricula and testing across public education and higher education. Associate Commissioner Glenda Barron heads this division.

The Academic Excellence and Research (AER) Division houses the Academic Affairs and Research (AAR) department that works with all institutions on program review and approvals for undergraduate, graduate and professional programs; core curriculum and Fields of Study programs; transfer; dual credit; distance learning and other academic issues. The former Community and Technical Colleges division of the agency is now part of AAR. AAR is focusing on course redesign, review of existing programs, aligning curriculum across K-12 and higher education, and growing Texas' research dollars. Carol Raney is Director of Undergraduate Education and Joe Stafford is the Assistant Commissioner for Academic Affairs and Research. AER also contains the Planning and Accountability department overseeing data collected from institutions, the state accountability system (mandated for all public four-year colleges and universities; community colleges voluntarily adopted a similar version), and higher education strategic planning. Susan Brown is the Assistant Commissioner for this department. David Gardner is the Associate Commissioner for the AER division and is serving as the Acting Deputy Commissioner for the agency.

Links to CTG, division descriptions, student aid programs, and the TX Education Data Center are listed below.

P-16 Alignment Policies and Practices

Two compelling mandates have been issued in the last year affecting P-16 alignment, an Executive Order from Governor Rick Perry directing institutions to identify college-readiness standards for Texas colleges and universities, and House Bill 1 from the recently called session of the Texas Legislature. HB 1 directs the Coordinating Board to work with the Texas Education Agency to create vertical P-16 teams (college faculty will recommend college-readiness

standards and expectations); expand dual credit opportunities for all school districts in Texas; create a strategic plan for student success through the entire P-16 pipeline; create a means of evaluating progress on achieving goals of the strategic plan; implement program plans and policies decreasing amount of developmental education now used in higher education, e.g. increased use of summer bridge programs or accelerated learning programs; begin a course re-design project to improve student learning and reduce course delivery costs in up to 25 selected entry-level lower-division academic courses; and, submit biennial reports to the Governor and various legislative and state agency units on implementation of each item.

Links to a summary of HB I, Governor Perry's Executive Order, current dual-credit/concurrent enrollment rules and other related material are listed below.

Unique Financial Aid Programs

TEXAS Grants

The Texas Legislature established the TEXAS (Towards EXcellence, Access and Success) Grant to ensure that deserving high school graduates with financial need could go to college. The TEXAS Grant, in combination with other aid, pays tuition and fees at the state's public colleges and universities. Eligibility requirements for an initial award include Texas residency; completion of the Recommended High School Program or Distinguished Achievement Program in high school, or completion of an associate's degree from a Texas public technical, state or community college; and, enrolling in higher education within specified time limits. Continuation requirements include meeting certain academic standards such as GPA and completed semester credit hour minimums. Eligibility continues for up to 150 semester credit hours and up to six years or until a bachelor's degree is earned.

B-On-Time Loans

Texas B-On-Time loans program provide eligible Texas students no-interest loans to attend colleges and universities in Texas. If the student meets specified goals, the entire loan amount can be forgiven upon graduation if the student receives an undergraduate degree or certificate from an eligible institution within specified time limits from the date the student initially enrolled in an eligible institution, and graduates with a cumulative GPA of at least a 3.0 on a four-point scale.

Links to information pages for these programs and other Texas grant and loan opportunities are listed below.

Links

Closing the Gaps

<http://www.thecb.state.tx.us/ClosingTheGaps/>

Summary of HB 1

http://www.thecb.state.tx.us/GeneralPubs/Agenda/Ag2006_07/XB/ Click on "Additional Information" then scroll to page three.

Division Descriptions

<http://www.thecb.state.tx.us/>

Texas Higher Education Data

<http://www.txhighereddata.org/>

Texas P-16 State Leadership Consortium

<http://www.texasp16slc.org/>

79th Session (2005) Legislative Information

<http://www.thecb.state.tx.us/Board/79thSession/>

Paying for College

<http://www.collegefortexans.com/TEXASGrant/TEXASGrant.cfm>

<http://www.collegefortexans.com/paying/finaidtypes.cfm>

<http://www.collegefortexans.com/paying/>

<http://www.collegefortexans.com/cfbin/tofa.cfm?Kind=LFP>

Rules for Grants and Scholarship Programs

http://www.thecb.state.tx.us/Rules/tac3.cfm?Chapter_ID=22&Subchapter=L#22.226