

# 2019 BOTI Impact Report



Texas Success Center

## INTRODUCTION

Texans must be prepared with high quality postsecondary credentials to engage in a labor market that is undergoing rapid innovation and technological progress. Leaders recognize this need, and in response Texas implemented the 60X30 Higher Education Plan which aims to increase the percentage of individuals between the ages of 25-34 with a certificate or degree to 60% by 2030. As of 2019, 44% of Texans had a certificate or degree from a Texas or out-of-state higher education institution.<sup>1</sup> Though this rate is rising each year, stakeholders must engage all sectors of higher education to meet this goal.

Community colleges play a critical role in providing affordable education and job training opportunities that contribute to the state's economy, support jobs, and raise wages. In Texas, community colleges serve a significant proportion of collegegoers. In the fall of 2019, Texas community colleges served over 700,000 students,<sup>2</sup> nearly half of all students enrolled in Texas higher education.<sup>3</sup> Supporting efficient and effective pathways to postsecondary success in community colleges is imperative to provide more Texans with access to jobs with family-sustaining wages, prepare the Texas workforce for the modern labor market, and to meet the 60x30TX goal of supporting the Texas economy with an educated workforce.

Community colleges in Texas are well situated to meet the demands of educating Texans seeking postsecondary credentials. All community college districts in Texas have committed to redesigning the student experience through Texas Pathways—an integrated, system-wide approach to college design that guides students into and through postsecondary education to help more students earn meaningful credentials, transfer to universities with no loss of credit, and gain employment in careers with value in the labor market. The Texas Pathways strategy is based on four pillars of practice: (1) clarifying paths to student end goals, (2) helping students choose and enter a pathway, (3) helping students stay on their pathway, and (4) ensuring students are learning.

The Texas Success Center aims to bridge the gap between policy and practice to increase student success and socioeconomic mobility for Texans by supporting college stakeholders to fully implement Texas Pathways. With the Center's support, colleges build capacity to implement and scale practices to reach all students. The Center is committed to helping all Texas community colleges engage fully in Texas Pathways through strategic supports that include Texas Pathways Institutes, Board of Trustees Institutes, regional meetings, and continued opportunities for knowledge development.

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<sup>1</sup> Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board. 2019. 60X30 Progress Report. <http://www.60x30tx.com/media/1518/2019-60x30tx-progress-report.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> Texas Association of Community Colleges. 2019. Fall 2019 TX Community College Fall Enrollment Survey Report. [https://tacc.org/sites/default/files/documents/2020-08/tacc\\_fall\\_19\\_enroll\\_report.pdf](https://tacc.org/sites/default/files/documents/2020-08/tacc_fall_19_enroll_report.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> Texas Comptroller. 2017. Texas Community Colleges. <https://comptroller.texas.gov/economy/economic-data/colleges/>

## BOARD OF TRUSTEES INSTITUTE

Community college boards of trustees play an important role in college success as they create, enact, and monitor policies that establish standards for learning that are in the best interest of the public they serve. Making student success a priority for governance is necessary for Texas community colleges to fully engage in Texas Pathways so that colleges can contribute to the state's higher education goals. This student-success focused role of the board is recognized by the Association of Community College Trustees as they state:

**Effective governance with an emphasis on student success is a priority for our nation's community colleges. Assuring student access, equity, success, and completion—primary components of institutional accountability—is the most important public policy work that college trustees can undertake to fulfill their governance and fiduciary responsibilities.** <sup>4</sup>

To support boards of trustees in this important work, the Texas Success Center offers an annual institute designed to engage board members with valuable resources and tools that align with the Texas Pathways strategy. The 2019 annual Board of Trustees Institute (BOTI) took place February 5-7 in Horseshoe Bay, TX. For the first time, the Texas Success Center invited all colleges to attend the BOTI. More than 50 college leaders, including presidents, board chairs, and trustees from 24 colleges attended. The institute focused on the role of the board in supporting student learning and success. The goal set for the 2019 BOTI was for every participating board to leave the institute having made, or reaffirmed, commitments to action (CTAs) to empower their CEO to set the climate and expectation for institutional excellence guided by a comprehensive student success strategy.

Numerous individuals from educational organizations presented at the BOTI on the role of the board, pathways implementation, fostering equity, and analyzing data for student success. Additionally, team strategy time was used to create CTAs based on the goals of the institute, institutional needs, and promising practices to promote equity, success, and completion.

### BOTI Attending Colleges

Alamo Colleges  
Alvin Community College  
Amarillo College  
Austin Community College District  
Brazosport College  
Coastal Bend College  
Del Mar College  
El Paso Community College  
Galveston College  
Grayson College  
Trinity Valley Community College  
Weatherford College

Hill College  
Houston Community College  
Howard College  
Kilgore College  
Laredo College  
Lee College  
Midland College  
North Central Texas College  
Paris Junior College  
Temple College  
Victoria College  
Wharton County Junior College

<sup>4</sup>The Association of Community College Trustees. 2021. Board Roles & Responsibilities. <https://www.acct.org/page/board-roles-responsibilities-overview>

## SCOPE OF ANALYSIS

The following report examines the commitments to action (CTAs) created by the participating colleges to determine the impact of the BOTI on board actions aimed at creating a comprehensive student success strategy. CTAs were collected and coded from the 24 BOTI-attending colleges. Additionally, a search of board minutes and college websites from February 2019 – March 2020 provided data on college and board actions taken after the BOTI. Due to COVID-19, we were unable to collect individual impact reports from colleges. Therefore, only board and college actions directly related to the BOTI CTA items found in the search of online resources were included in the analysis below.

## FINDINGS

The CTAs and associated board minutes found online were divided into four categories: (1) strategic planning, (2) data and student success, (3) policy, and (4) financial and fiduciary responsibilities. CTA and board minutes from each category were coded and thematically analyzed.

### Strategic Planning

Student success and equity through guided pathways were at the core of the colleges' strategic planning goals. Eighteen of the CTAs included proposed action on strategic planning aimed at various outcomes: (a) identifying strategic priorities, (b) board and CEO collaboration, (c) focused retreats, and (d) communication. Board and college actions were taken by 15 colleges on parts or all of the CTA commitments.

**Identifying strategic priorities.** Colleges focused on making progress towards institutional goals aligned with guided pathways principles.

- **Weatherford College** committed to revisiting the college's mission and connecting it to student success and guided pathways to become a student-ready college. In response, the strategic plan was updated in December 2019 to focus on student success.
- The **Midland College** board committed to approving the college's mission statement annually and approving the new strategic plan for 2019-2020 with guided pathways goals and objectives. In response, the board reviewed the college's mission, strategic goals, and operational results and plans in October 2019.
- At **Kilgore College**, the board and college committed to supporting the implementation of *Focus to Finish* (an 8-week course initiative) and to a long-term evolving process of continuous improvement. In response, the strategic plan was updated in December 2019, and *Focus to Finish* student success data was presented to the board periodically.
- At **Galveston College**, the board committed to reassessing long-term goals periodically and set seven goals for 2020. Several of these goals pertained to strategic planning for student success:
  - Continue to advocate for and support the mission of Galveston College

- Continue to support student access and success through the implementation of the strategic plan
- Continue to advocate for and support new instructional programs (i.e., baccalaureate programs and other academic and technical programs) as appropriate
- Continue to advocate for and support educational programs surrounding workforce education and other specialized training opportunities

**Board and CEO collaboration.** Several colleges committed to supporting their CEO to implement guided pathways strategies, and frequent communication between boards and CEOs was evident at many colleges.

- At **Howard College**, board members committed to giving the CEO preliminary areas of focus for the college's strategic plan review. The CEO and board interacted frequently, including at the February 2019 meeting, when the board evaluated the CEO's work.

**Focused retreats.** Colleges committed to creating and attending a focused retreat for guided-pathways-focused strategic planning.

- At **Galveston College**, the board committed to ensuring data/equity/student success discussions were included on the board's annual retreat agenda. In response, student success measures were discussed at the board retreat in August 2019.
- At **Howard College**, board members committed to attending the August Success Summit and considering full board participation in the BOTI. In response, board members attended a redesigned Success Summit—a yearly event that hosts all Howard College campus leaders to discuss data—centered on student success and the budget in August 2019. Additionally, the board determined that they would hold a local board retreat in May 2020 with the Texas Success Center to allow all board members to receive BOTI information. This retreat did not occur due to COVID-19.
- **Wharton County Junior College** committed to an annual strategic planning retreat to review both institutional and environmental data to serve as a solid foundation for making informed decisions for the future of the institution. In addition, the board committed to reviewing annual priorities to ensure full alignment with the vision that has been set for the institution. The President and Vice President of Planning and Institutional Effectiveness committed to ensuring that student success and equity data would be presented on a regular and recurring basis to keep the board continually engaged with disaggregated student success metrics. In response, the strategic planning retreat plan was adopted and board members attended the retreat in April 2019.

**Communication.** Colleges committed to improving the ways in which they communicate college priorities and student success.

- **Hill College** committed to quarterly reports on guided pathways design and implementation, and to utilizing student success board agenda items to share data. In response, the board heard the CEO guided pathways report in August 2019. The report informed the board that Hill College was selected to participate in Texas Pathways Cadre 2.2 to continue to build capacity for guided pathways reforms. Additionally, student success data was reported at several meetings.



- **Midland College** committed to receiving quarterly progress reports of the colleges Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and guided pathways work. In response, a review of KPIs occurred in October 2019.
- **North Central Texas College** committed to requiring reports for: (a) success rate data by discipline for high-risk students with a focus on men of color; (b) data regarding the utilization of supplemental instruction, tutoring and the increased success rate because of these services; and (c) data depicting degree of diversity among faculty, high-level administrators, instructional leaders, and faculty. In response, a *Best Performers Report* was heard in October 2019 and a Student Success Committee Meeting was held in January 2020.
- **Weatherford College** committed to adding student success stories to monthly guided pathways reports for board meetings. In response, guided pathways reports occurred each month.

## Data and Student Success

Colleges committed to reviewing data regularly and using Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to monitor student outcomes. Eleven of the CTAs proposed action on data and student success with various priorities: (a) KPIs, (b) data deep dives, and (c) equity and inclusion. Board and college actions were taken by 10 colleges on parts or all of the CTA commitments.

**Key Performance Indicators.** Colleges committed to monitoring and reporting disaggregated KPIs to measure progress and completion for various student groups.

- The President of **Alvin Community College** committed to reporting progress towards achievement of KPI goals. In November 2019, the Executive Director of Institutional Research and Effectiveness, updated the regents on the current implementation of the *Success Through Engaged Advising* Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) that: (a) created Pathways student indicators, (b) assigned advisors based on students' Pathways, (c) generated timelines for QEP implementation, (d) created a new advising curriculum, and (e) established faculty mentorship expectations. She also presented the college's annual data report based on data from the 2018-2019 academic year that included student data, enrollment by location, enrollment by course type, and a five-year comparison of certified enrollment headcount.
- At **Amarillo College**, trustees committed to monitoring KPIs for completion of math and English within the first year. In January 2020, the board heard about core math and English courses from college staff. Updates on student success measures were included in several meetings.

**"Previously, success rates in developmental education were high, but only 33% of those students went on to get college credit within a year. Now that developmental course work is integrated in the credit course, 60 to 80% of these students received college credit. Developmental Education faculty have done excellent work."**

**-Dr. Tamara Clunis, Amarillo College**

- At **Del Mar College**, the board and CEO committed to identifying KPIs that can be used to measure strategic goals, and to regularly review KPIs to monitor progress and needs. In response, the college outlined KPIs in the strategic plan and on the college website. KPI updates were heard by board and college leaders at several meetings throughout the year.

**Data deep dives.** Colleges committed to monitoring student progress by analyzing specific data to allow colleges to identify necessary supports for various student groups.

- At **Lee College**, the board committed to periodically monitoring progress in student access, retention, and completion (by gender, ethnicity, and socio-economic status). In response, the board heard a student success report during each regular board meeting.
- Leaders at **Paris Junior College** committed to disaggregating data by key characteristics to help identify student population where the college can provide assistance. Additionally, the college met most student achievement targets put in place in 2015 and used data to address student needs for online learning.

**Equity and inclusion.** Colleges committed to looking at disaggregated data to examine equity in access and outcomes.

- At **Alvin Community College**, the Board committed to discussing cultural sensitivity and to identifying achievement gaps in student certificate and degree completion. The board also committed to developing and approving a board equity value statement. In response, President Albrecht invited the board to provide input on the Core Values Statements for the college. Then, in November 2019, the board approved the Core Values Statements (See Artifacts).
- **Amarillo College** committed to asking themselves: What data do we have that shows educational inequity? Are we doing enough? Are we ahead or behind? Then, throughout the year, the board regularly heard updates on the college's *No Excuses Poverty Initiative* with disaggregated data. Amarillo College's *No Excuses Poverty Initiative* is comprised of four programs: (1) social services, (2) a food pantry, (3) a mentoring program, and (4) a career center. Each of these provide direct services to meet student needs and contribute to their success.

## Policy

Colleges set policy goals with the aim of supporting guided pathways work, explicitly supporting partnerships, and mandating evidence-based experiences for students. Fourteen of the CTAs proposed action on policy focusing on: (a) guided pathways implementation, (b) student-focused implementation, and (c) equity. Board and college outcomes were taken by five colleges on parts or all of the CTA commitments.

**Guided pathways implementation.** Colleges focused on developing policies aligned with the Texas Pathways strategy.

- At **Howard College**, the board and CEO committed to presenting and endorsing the final pathways selections for the college's programs. At the May 2019 board meeting, the Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs

- presented pathways aligned with high school endorsements and college programs. Each pathway is aligned with career opportunities, transfer opportunities, local employers, and wages. Students and others can access the pathways on the college's website. Trustees voted unanimously to adopt the pathways.

**Student-focused implementation.** Commitments were made to review current policies and make necessary changes to increase student success in terms of retention, completion, and employment.

- Austin Community College** committed to improving internal communication by charging administration with defining the rationale and intended outcomes for major student success initiatives and detailing the processes by which major changes will be communicated, rolled out, monitored, assessed, and implemented. Additionally, they tasked administration with developing appropriate checklists to ensure these steps were implemented. Lastly, board members were assigned to monitor progress of each goal with corresponding staff and determine if additional policies need to be developed or strengthened to advance and achieve goals. In response to this CTA item, student success initiatives were shared at each board meeting throughout the year.
- Brazosport College** committed to creating coherent pathways leading to student goals by creating and implementing the *Catalyst Program*, a cohort-based, dual credit instructional model through which students can earn an associate degree within one year of high school graduation. This program supports high-performing underserved students by helping students choose and enter a pathway leading to their educational and career goals. Every first-time-in-college student is assigned an *ACE It* coach—the *ACE It* program supports Brazosport College's mission for student success through a structured and collaborative mentoring relationship so that students become empowered to take responsibility for developing their education and career goals. The college set a target of 15-20:1 student to faculty/staff coach ratio and 60:1 for student to dedicated part-time coach ratio. In response, in March 2019 and November 2019, *Catalyst Program* updates and guided pathways updates were shared with the board. In May 2019, dual credit initiatives were shared with the board. Additionally, at five meetings between March 2019 and March 2020, guided pathways and *ACE It* updates were shared with the board.
- Del Mar College** committed to reducing time to completion by piloting an 8-week term program, adding additional staff positions dedicated to advising, and including all faculty and staff in the summit to review KPIs and priorities. In September 2019, the Vice President for Student Affairs presented on the five-year strategic plan for 2019- 2024: *Aspire. Engage. Achieve.* The strategic plan reflects the student experience that the college strives to provide. The committee identified six goals and associated KPIs: (1) completion, (2) recruitment and persistence, (3) academic preparedness and student learning, (4) learning environments, (5) workforce development, community partnerships, and advocacy, and (6) financial effectiveness and affordability.

**Equity.** Boards committed to addressing equity through policy. However, we were unable to find actions taken by boards based on the CTA items submitted. The Texas Success Center will respond with targeted supports for designing equity-informed policies.



## Financial & Fiduciary Responsibilities

Colleges committed to reviewing and adopting a sound budget, being reflective of the college's plan/mission, monitoring progress, and supporting student success and guided pathways. To achieve these goals, 19 college CTAs included: (a) aligning budget with college goals, (b) budgeting for student success, and (c) emergency funding. Board and college outcomes were taken by 15 colleges on parts or all of the CTA commitments.

***Aligning budget with college goals.*** Colleges committed to ensuring that the budget related to and supported the institutional mission and student success initiatives.

- **Del Mar College** board members committed to ensuring that the budget supported the strategic goals and KPI attainment goals of the college. In late 2019, the board met with the Director of Accounting to discuss the college's KPIs, strategic plan, and initiatives moving forward.
- At **Howard College**, members committed to dividing the existing annual 2019 budget workshop into two sessions in June and August. Additionally, members committed to reviewing results of prior year's budget focus on strategic and operational goals in the June workshop in preparation for the August budget workshop. In August, the BOTI CTA was reviewed during the planning workshop. Trustees shared strategic budget priorities they would like to see the district focus on for fiscal year 2019-20. Trustees suggested focusing on improvement of success metrics; student navigation from recruitment to graduation; staffing; alignment with business/industry and funding for programs; changing dynamics relative to dual credit and the traditional/nontraditional students; IT needs; and opportunities for private sector support.
- **Trinity Valley Community College's** board and CEO committed to monitoring fiscal progress. They did this by approving budget reports at each monthly meeting.

***Budgeting for student success.*** Board members committed to monitoring the colleges' budgets to ensure that all aspects were aligned with increasing student success.

- **Alvin Community College's** CEO committed to seeking allocation or reallocation of funds for student success and guided pathways implementation. President Albrecht reported several grants awarded to Alvin Community College throughout the year that focused on student success.
- At **Kilgore College**, trustees committed to a culture shift from full-time equivalency to an emphasis on student success-specific retention and completion funding measures. In March 2019, the board approved the new student-success-focused policy (See Artifacts).

***Emergency funding.*** Colleges committed to establishing guidelines for an emergency fund for to support student needs.

- The **Galveston College** CEO committed to exploring the development of a Student Emergency Loan Fund. Additionally, the board committed to reallocating funds for a student emergency loan fund start-up and planned on incorporating this fund into the annual budget. In August, the CEO adopted the student emergency fund into the budgeting process. The board consented to aiding students in need, allocating \$50,000 in aid to the budget, and discussed scholarship funds. The board passed the budget during their August retreat.

## CONCLUSION

The 2019 BOTI has provided Texas Pathways participating trustees with an opportunity to elevate their knowledge of effective governance that contributes to student success, equity, and completion. Based on the analysis in this report, the following recommendations may support the ongoing implementation of guided pathways.

1. Board members should create a CTA implementation plan and determine improvement cycles for each action item to ensure adequate time and resources are committed to achieving CTA goals.
2. Board members should create a formal agenda item or design a retreat to review the BOTI curriculum and CTA items. During this meeting, BOTI content can be presented to all board members, including those were not present at the BOTI, to ensure all board members have access to the resources provided by the Texas Success Center and the full board can have opportunity to adopt the CTA items.
3. Board members should create a recurring agenda item to review progress on CTA items and review college reports associated with CTA items. Boards and colleges should review existing reports to see if they meet the current needs of the board.
4. Board members should continue to seek out resources from the Texas Success Center to address professional learning related to CTA goals.
5. Board members should continue to examine disaggregated student data to understand the impact of policy and practice on different student groups and consider changes in policy based on this data. The board should seek out their student voices to provide context and understanding of the data to inform their governance decision-making process.

## ARTIFACTS

Many of the participating colleges have integrated the goals set at the BOTI into board meeting agendas and minutes, strategic plans, mission statements, and external communications. A few examples are provided below:

- [Austin Community College Strategic Plan Update](#)
- [Austin Community College Strategic Goals Board Retreat](#)
- [Alvin Community College Core Values Statements](#)
- [Alvin Community College Strategic Plan](#)
- [Brazosport College Strategic Plan](#)
- [Del Mar College Strategic Plan Accomplishments](#)
- [Howard College Board Minutes BOTI Report](#)
- [Kilgore College Mission Statement](#)
- [Kilgore College Strategic Plan Update](#)
- [Kilgore College Student Success Policy](#)
- [Weatherford College Guided Pathways Update](#)
- [Weatherford College Strategic Plan Update](#)