



Texas Commission on Community College Finance Testimony by Dr. Pam Anglin President, Paris Junior College

September 12, 2022

Thank you, Commission Members, for the opportunity to offer public testimony today. My name is Dr. Pam Anglin and I serve as President of Paris Junior College, with our main campus located in Paris, and a center in both Sulphur Springs and Greenville. Paris Junior College is a comprehensive community college, with an annual unduplicated enrollment of approximately 7,500 credit students. We proudly offer a variety of academic programs, workforce education training, and an array of continuing education instruction across our Northeast Texas service area.

You have already heard from Dr. Brent Wallace, who provided a perspective on the draft recommendations from the Texas Association of Community Colleges (TACC). Paris Junior College is a member of TACC, so my purpose today is to amplify a few things already said by Dr. Wallace, but from the perspective of a small to medium-sized community college.

First, let me add my note of appreciation to each of you – for taking on the complex issue of community college finance and producing a set of recommendations that have the potential to be truly game-changing.

As Dr. Wallace stated, many of these recommendations track with our TACC recommendations – and I echo my colleague’s statement that we are encouraged by the recommended change from an allocation method for state funding based primarily on contact hours, to one that is dynamic, and outcomes driven. In other words, we favor a “lift all boats” approach that, as Commissioner Keller recently described, would allow individual colleges to not be in competition with each other, but only with themselves. This approach would benefit community colleges of all sizes across the state.

As you know, colleges like mine face some unique challenges: lower property values, high variance – and volatility – in these values, declining or dispersed populations, lack of capital to jump-start needed investments in workforce education capacity, and insufficient resources to address a variety of operational needs. Paris Junior College serves five and one-half counties with its taxing district being only Lamar County. If our entire service area were in the taxing district, our tax base would be in the top quartile of the state’s 50 community colleges. Even though our assessed value has grown approximately \$1 billion each of the last two years it equates to less than \$300,000 per year in new property tax revenue.

Thus, we are glad to see important language in the draft recommendation that would assist in meeting many of these needs. The establishment of a foundational guaranteed yield would help to address the challenges of small and rural-facing colleges, though I agree that consistency and



predictability – as stated by Dr. Wallace in his testimony – are important touchstones for this guaranteed yield. For example, we would need to further clarify how sufficient ‘base’ funding for the guaranteed yield will be determined, and whether it will consider the variance that occurs in property tax valuations.

Likewise, increased funding for expanded workforce education training, including non-credit Continuing Education instruction, will be critical for colleges like mine to allow us to meet the growing needs of business and industry in our region of Northeast Texas. PJC has been fortunate to receive funding through four different TRUE grants to meet immediate needs in high demand areas. The industry needs and demands for a skilled workforce have never been greater. The economic well-being and growth in our region depends on the college being able to continually provide a trained workforce.

Finally, the growth of dual credit participation has been a success of our state’s community colleges. Important recommendations are made by the Commission, particularly regarding the need for financial aid for economically disadvantaged students seeking to enroll in dual credit. We are encouraged by this call for targeted financial aid, but I would urge thoughtful attention be given to the idea for a uniform tuition rate for dual credit, and the impact this could have upon the business model for many colleges across the state.

These decisions on tuition, as you know, are set by our elected boards, often with an eye toward access to our colleges, and to compete with nearby four-year institutions. Once service areas and taxing districts are brought into the mix, there’s a surprising variety to how - particularly small and rural-facing colleges - recoup their investments in dual credit with different tuition rates and waivers. For example, we charge \$150 per three-hour course in order to be competitive and maintain our dual credit offerings in our school districts. Our dual credit enrollment has grown to make up 43% of our total enrollment this fall.

I will close by saying that this Commission has done an excellent job of listening to the concerns of community colleges across the state. We thank Commissioner Keller, Chairman Woody Hunt, and of course, all members of the Commission – including my colleagues who themselves are community college presidents and chancellors – for your hard work in producing these draft recommendations.

All of our community colleges, whether small, medium, and/or rural facing, or large and urban, are ready to continue to roll up our sleeves, work with each of you – and the Texas Legislature – to find solutions that can sustain the vital role community colleges play in our great state.

Thank you and I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.