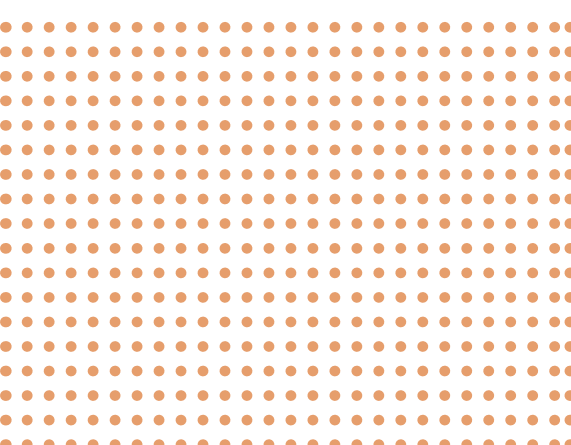
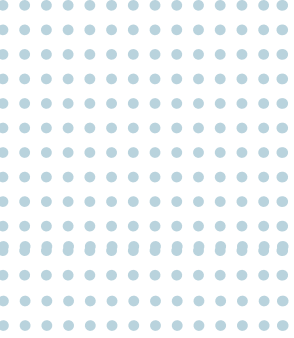




Texas Association of  
Community Colleges

INNOVATE TO  
ELEVATE

Shaping the Future of Texas Community Colleges





# WELCOME TO AUSTIN!

Thank you for joining us at the 2024 TACC Summer Meeting,  
**Innovate to Elevate: Shaping the Future of Texas Community Colleges!**

The conference will include plenary sessions on an array of topics important to our sector including various aspects of House Bill 8 implementation, evolving legislative and legal affairs, the importance K-12 partnerships, and innovations in artificial intelligence (AI).

We hope this event fosters peer learning and offers valuable insights for navigating the future of higher education.



**Network:** Westin\_Conf  
**Password:** Domain2024

# PROGRAM

## JULY 31, 2024

---

**3:30-5:00 PM**

Primrose Ballroom

### **ELEVATING IMPACT: HARNESSING CREDENTIAL OF VALUES & WORKFORCE DATA FOR COMMUNITY COLLEGE SUCCESS**

Explore the transformative potential of the Credential of Value methodology and its premium measure, designed to assess and enhance the alignment of academic credentials with workforce demands. This session also introduces the Community College Finance Hub (CCF Hub), detailing its essential data components, providing a comprehensive roadmap for its implementation, and facilitating a discovery session to tailor the necessary tools for participating institutions. Leaders will be invited to share their expertise, contributing to the enhancement of the data hub and the development of future dashboards that will be vital in navigating the complexities of the educational landscape.

**Dr. David Troutman**, Deputy Commissioner, Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board

---

**6:30 - 8:30 PM**

Primrose Ballroom

### **WELCOME DINNER: FALLING OR FLYING? WHAT'S NEXT IN TEXAS POLITICS**

After a tumultuous year and a half in Texas politics, James Henson and Ross Ramsey survey the political landscape in Texas in the run-up to the 2024 presidential election and the 2025 legislative session in Texas.

**James Henson**, Director, Texas Politics Project, UT Austin  
**Ross Ramsey**, Co-Founder, Texas Tribune

---

**8:30 PM - 12:00 AM**

Presidential Suite,  
2nd Floor - Room 217

### **HOSPITALITY SUITE**

Sponsored by Great Western Dining



## AUGUST 1, 2024

7:00 - 8:30 AM

### GENERAL BREAKFAST

Primrose Ballroom

8:00 - 11:00 AM

### TACC QUARTERLY BOARD MEETING

CEO-Only

Plumeria

9:00 - 10:30 AM

### TEXAS HIGHER EDUCATION COORDINATING BOARD EXPO

Primrose Ballroom

During the TACC Quarterly Board Meeting, general conference attendees are invited to attend this session where key agency staff will highlight higher education initiatives currently underway at the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board. Topics include:

- Community College Finance
- Continuing Education & Workforce Training Credentials
- Transfer & Program Approval
- Student Financial Aid – FAST & TEOG

10:30 - 11:15 AM

### COFFEE BREAK

Primrose Foyer

Sponsored by Huckabee

**Huckabee**

11:15 AM - 12:15 PM

### WORKFORCE, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, & EDUCATION PARTNERSHIPS – A FUTURE FOCUS

Primrose Ballroom

Texas continues to outpace the nation in economic expansion and job creation fueled by a growing workforce. In this session, distinguished leaders will discuss the importance of advancing industry aligned education and workforce development strategies to sustain the state's economic growth. The panel will examine workforce trends and discuss how colleges might best leverage the new financing framework to build a workforce with the skills and credentials vital for future success. The conversation will also explore talent issues facing employers and the importance of building and sustaining partnerships that include education, workforce development, and economic leaders.

**Joe Esparza**, Commissioner Representing Employers, Texas Workforce Commission

**Aaron Demerson**, President & CEO, Texas Economic Development Corporation

**Sonja Clark**, Amarillo Site Leader, Bell Flight

**Moderator: Andres Alcantar**, Senior Workforce Lead, TACC

12:15 - 12:45 PM

### LUNCH BUFFET

Primrose Foyer

Progress through buffet line and return to ballroom for lunch remarks.

**12:45 - 1:15 PM**

Primrose Ballroom

**INNOVATING FOR IMPACT: THE NEXT CHAPTER FOR THE TEXAS SUCCESS CENTER**

In this session, Dr. Kimberly Lowry, the new Executive Director of the Texas Success Center, and Vice President of TACC, will provide an engaging presentation reflecting on her first six weeks in the role. Learn about her vision to double down on support for colleges to increase student success outcomes, enhance the Center's local, regional, and national footprint, and strengthen partnerships. Dr. Lowry will also outline a strategic call to action, emphasizing the importance of collective support in driving transformative change across the state of Texas.

**Dr. Kimberly Lowry**, Vice President of TACC & Executive Director of Texas Success Center

**1:15 - 1:30 PM**

Primrose Foyer

**COFFEE BREAK**

Sponsored by Huckabee

**Huckabee****1:30 - 2:30 PM**

Primrose Ballroom

**THE VITAL ROLE OF COMMUNITY COLLEGES IN SHAPING OPPORTUNITY FOR ALL TEXANS**

As the global economy evolves, community colleges play an increasingly critical role in preparing Texans to succeed in the present - and future - economy. Texas 2036 President, David Leebron, will explore how the classroom-to-career pipeline is changing and opportunities for Texas community colleges to broaden their reach and impact as an integral part of Texas' educational and workforce development systems.

**David Leebron**, President & CEO, Texas 2036

**2:30 - 2:45 PM****BREAK****CONCURRENT SESSIONS | 2:45-3:30 PM**

Lantana

**Navigating the Legislature: Advocacy in Uncertain Times**

How community colleges can cut through the noise of politics to lift their institution and sector.

**Jesse Ancira**, Consultant, Ancira Strategies

**Teri Crawford**, Vice Chancellor of Strategic Relations, San Jacinto College

**Dr. Justin Lonon**, Chancellor, Dallas College

**Sen. Florence Shapiro**, Consultant, Shapiro Linn LLC

**Moderator: Jacob Cottingham**, Senior Director of Government Relations, TACC



## Camelia

### Dual Credit Partnerships that Pay Off

In this session, participants will learn effective practices from leaders at Dallas ISD/Dallas College and Era ISD/North Central Texas College including:

- Navigating cost sharing agreements.
- Safeguarding student information through actionable data sharing agreements and MOUs.
- Programmatic design to set students up for success that also results in increased state funding.
- Balancing priorities in PK12 and community college funding structures to achieve innovative solutions.

**Dr. Tiffany Kirksey**, Vice Provost of Educational Partnerships, Dallas College

**Dr. Shannon Lewis**, Superintendent, Era ISD

**Dr. Cheryl Nevels**, Deputy Chief of College Readiness, Dallas ISD

**Dr. Brent Wallace**, Chancellor, North Central Texas College

## Plumeria

### Navigating the Legal Landscape: Key Legal Issues for Texas Community Colleges

Join us for an insightful panel discussion featuring legal experts who will delve into the pressing legal challenges faced by community colleges in Texas. This session will provide a comprehensive overview of the current legal landscape, focusing on recent legislative and executive developments.

**Cobby A. Caputo**, Attorney, Bickerstaff, Heath, Delgado, Acosta, LLP

**Nichole Bunker-Henderson**, General Counsel, Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board

**Amy Magee**, Director of Community College Services, Texas Association of School Board

**Moderator: Augustin “Augie” Rivera, Jr.**, General Counsel, Del Mar College

## Primrose Ballroom

### Defining Success: HB 8 Technical Assistance and Implementation Strategies

This panel will discuss institutional strategies to implement House Bill 8 (HB 8) and upcoming technical assistance supports provided by TACC. Panelists will discuss how their college informs their communities, continues to ensure data informed decisions, and how HB 8 has impacted their definition of success. This session will also dive into technical assistance needs and TACC’s continued effort to identify resources that effectively support member colleges throughout the upcoming academic year.

**Dr. Jenna Cullinane Hege**, Vice Chancellor of Institutional Research & Analytics, Austin Community College

**Brian Jones**, Associate Vice President for Institutional Effectiveness, Odessa College

**Natalie Oswald**, Dean of Arts, Sciences & Technology, Panola College

**Martha Synder**, Managing Director, Postsecondary Transformation, HCM Strategists

**Moderator: Elizabeth Chivers**, Senior Director of Strategy & Policy Analysis, TACC

---

**3:30 - 3:45 PM**

Primrose Foyer

## **SNACK BREAK**

Sponsored by Western Governors University



---

**3:45 - 4:30 PM**

All Conference  
Spaces Available

## **TEAM TIME**

This time allows college teams to discuss insights gained from the conference, align on organizational goals, and brainstorm innovative solutions to current challenges. Take this opportunity to strengthen team dynamics, share knowledge, and develop actionable plans for the future. On the last page of this program you will find guiding questions to help start the discussion.

---

**4:30 - 7:00 PM**

## **DINNER ON YOUR OWN**

Restaurant options are available near the property.

---

**7:00 - 9:00 PM**

Primrose Ballroom

## **DR. MIMI VALEK + JOHN MAY WASHERS TOURNAMENT & RECEPTION**

Don't forget to sign up at the registration table!

---

**9:00 PM - 12:00 AM**

Presidential Suite,  
2nd Floor - Room 217

## **HOSPITALITY SUITE**

Sponsored by Great Western Dining



**AUGUST 2, 2024****7:30 - 8:30 AM****GENERAL BREAKFAST**

Primrose Foyer

**8:45 - 9:45 AM****NAVIGATING AI TRANSFORMATION:  
STRATEGIC INSIGHTS FOR TEXAS COMMUNITY  
COLLEGES**

Primrose Ballroom

This session will explore strategic approaches to AI transformation on college campuses, focusing on striking a balance between an AI Responsible and AI Forward approach. We will discuss how to set priorities that align with your stakeholders' needs and strategic plan, secure funding for AI projects through employer training opportunities and leveraging House Bill 8, and involve learners across the spectrum, including the existing workforce, current students, K-12 students, and underserved communities.

**Todd McLees**, AI Strategist for Higher Education**9:45 - 10:30 AM****THE IMPACT OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE ON  
HIGHER EDUCATION**

Primrose Ballroom

This session will explore the transformative potential of artificial intelligence (AI) in higher education. Panelists will provide valuable perspectives on harnessing the power of AI to drive further innovation and excellence across our community colleges in Texas. Don't miss this opportunity to engage with experts and explore the cutting-edge developments shaping the future of postsecondary education.

**Dr. Luke Dowden**, Chief Online Learning Officer & Associate Vice Chancellor, Alamo Colleges**Todd McLees**, AI Strategist for Higher Education**Dr. Muddassir Siddiqi**, Vice Chancellor of Instructional Innovation & Digital Strategy, Houston Community College**Dr. Michelle Singh**, Assistant Commissioner of Digital Learning, Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board**Moderator: Dr. Brenda Hellyer**, Chancellor, San Jacinto College**10:45 - 11:30 AM****AWARDS & CLOSING REMARKS**

Primrose Ballroom

**THANK YOU FOR JOINING US & SAFE TRAVELS BACK HOME!**



## GUIDING QUESTIONS

These questions are designed to guide meaningful discussions that can lead to actionable insights and strategies for enhancing the impact of community colleges in Texas.

### CREDENTIALS OF VALUE & WORKFORCE DATA:

**Question:** How can the Credential of Value methodology and the Community College Finance Hub be leveraged to better align academic credentials with evolving workforce demands, and what are the potential challenges and benefits of implementing these tools in your institution?

**Context:** Discuss the session on “Elevating Impact: Harnessing Credential of Values & Workforce Data for Community College Success” to explore the transformative potential of these tools and how they can be tailored to fit the needs of various institutions.

### K-12 PARTNERSHIPS FOR FUTURE SUCCESS:

**Question:** What are the key elements of successful dual credit partnerships between community colleges and K-12 institutions, and how can these partnerships be designed to ensure long-term sustainability and mutual benefits?

**Context:** Reflect on the “Dual Credit Partnerships that Pay Off” session to consider effective practices such as cost-sharing agreements, data sharing, and balancing funding priorities to set students up for success.

### AI TRANSFORMATION IN EDUCATION:

**Question:** What strategic approaches can your institution adopt to balance an AI-Responsible and AI-Forward approach, and how can these strategies be integrated into existing educational frameworks to enhance learning outcomes?

**Context:** Analyze insights from the session on “Navigating AI Transformation: Strategic Insights for Texas Community Colleges” to discuss prioritizing stakeholder needs, securing funding for AI projects, and involving diverse learner groups.

### AI INTEGRATION IN CURRICULUM:

**Question:** What steps can your institution take to integrate AI technologies into the curriculum, and how can you ensure that both faculty and students are adequately prepared for this transition?

**Context:** Consider the potential benefits and challenges of incorporating AI into various academic programs, and discuss strategies for faculty training, student support, and curriculum development.

### AI-ENHANCED STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES:

**Question:** How can AI be utilized to improve student support services such as advising, tutoring, and career counseling, and what measures can be taken to maintain a personal touch in these services?

**Context:** Explore the potential of AI-driven tools to enhance student engagement and success while ensuring that human elements of support remain intact.

# PLENARY SPEAKERS



## SONJA CLARK

Sonja Clark is the Amarillo Site Leader for Bell. Clark provides strategic leadership and accountability for cross-functional teams and site support for all Amarillo activities and operations. She focuses on creating and executing an overall people strategy as well as ensuring engagement and collaboration both across the site and within the Amarillo community.

Clark has been with Bell for over 14 years and served in multiple leadership roles with increasing responsibility in Human Resources and Environmental, Health & Safety. Most recently, she championed opening an onsite patient-centered medical home with a pharmacy for Bell's Dallas-Fort Worth area employees. She is known for her passion to meet people where they are and help them move forward to achieve their individual goals.

Prior to joining Bell, Sonja was the Administrative Director for Northwest Texas Healthcare System, a part of Universal Health Services. She holds a Master of Science degree in Nursing, Administration and a Bachelor of Science in Nursing from West Texas A&M University, as well as a Certified Occupational Health Nurse Specialist. Sonja is very active in her local community and serves on multiple boards of various organizations, usually tied to healthcare and focused on advancing quality and safety in those organizations. In her free time, she can usually be found on the tennis court.



## AARON DEMERSON

Aaron Demerson currently serves at the President and CEO of the Texas Economic Development Corporation (TxEDC) and was appointed in November of 2023. TxEDC strategically partners and markets Texas both domestically and internationally as a premier business destination for companies looking to locate, relocate and/or expand their existing business footprint.

Previously, Demerson served as the Commissioner Representing Employers for the Texas Workforce Commission for 4 years, which advocated for over 660,000 Texas employers and over 3 million small businesses.

President Demerson is devoted to supporting workforce, economic development and education efforts which he likes to call the "secret sauce" for success in Texas.



## LUKE DOWDEN

Luke Dowden is the Chief Online Learning Officer & Associate Vice Chancellor for the Alamo Colleges District.

Through Alamo Colleges Online, he leads and supports capacity-building initiatives at all five community colleges so each may gain a greater market share of online learners in their respective service areas.

Luke serves the online learning community by providing his leadership on the Quality Matter Board's Executive Committee, the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board's Learning Technology Advisory Committee, UPCEA's Council for Credential Innovation Leadership, and WCET's Executive Council.

He has earned multiple honors and awards, including the Excellence in Leadership Practice Award from the 2022 Alamo Colleges District Emerging Leaders Class and the Leadership Award in Digital Credentials from 1EdTech (2023). He was also part of OLC's distinguished Class of Fellows in 2022.



## JOE ESPARZA

Joe Esparza currently serves as the Commissioner Representing Employers for the Texas Workforce Commission. Governor Abbott appointed him to the three-member commission on November 7, 2023.

In his role, Commissioner Esparza serves as an advocate for over 660,000 Texas employers and over 3 million small businesses. He and his team serve as a key resource for all Texas employers to help businesses grow and thrive in Texas.

Prior to his appointment, Commissioner Esparza was sworn in as Texas Deputy Secretary of State on December 14, 2018. In addition, Esparza previously served as a Senior Appointments Manager in the office of the Governor, overseeing numerous gubernatorial appointments during Governor Abbott's first term. A graduate of Texas Tech University, Esparza earned a Bachelor of Science in Agricultural Communications.

Esparza received an Honorable Discharge from the United States Marine Corps and is a Veteran of the Global War on Terrorism, having served in Iraq from 1999-2007.



## JAMES HENSON

James Henson teaches in the Department of Government at the University of Texas at Austin, where he is the founder and executive director of the Texas Politics Project, a hub of research and public affairs work focused on providing non-partisan resources for understanding Texas government and politics.

He co-founded the longest running academic survey of Texas public opinion in 2008, and has worked on public and private survey research in Texas for a wide range of clients. His writing about Texas politics has appeared in every major Texas media outlet, as well as publications including The Washington Post, The Hill, Texas Monthly, The Conversation, and more.

He is the principal author of the Texas Politics webtext, now in its 12th edition, published by Soomo Learning and used in introductory Texas government courses at colleges and universities across the state. He is a frequent resource for news media, researchers, and civic and interest groups, including engaging in speaking engagements for groups in various sectors, including insurance, utilities, energy, automobile sales, medicine, and real estate.



## DAVID LEEBRON

David Leebron is the President and CEO of Texas 2036, a nonprofit, nonpartisan state policy organization working to ensure Texas remains the best place to live and work through the state's bicentennial in 2036 and beyond.

Prior to joining Texas 2036 in 2024, Leebron served for 18 years as president of Rice University where he is now President Emeritus and remains on the faculty as University Professor. Under Leebron's guidance, Rice underwent a period of growth and transformation increasing its undergraduate and graduate student populations, enhancing the campus with over \$1.8 billion in new construction and ongoing capital improvements, extending its research endeavors and international presence, deepening its relationship with its home city of Houston, and earning greater visibility locally, nationally and internationally.

Prior to taking the helm at Rice, Leebron was dean of Columbia Law School. Originally from Philadelphia, he is a graduate of Harvard College and Harvard Law School, where he was elected president of the Law Review in his second year. After graduating in 1979, he served as a law clerk for Judge Shirley Hufstедler on the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals. He began teaching at the UCLA School of Law in 1980 and at the NYU School of Law in 1983. In 1989, Leebron joined the Columbia Law School faculty.

# PLENARY SPEAKERS



**TODD MCLEES**

Todd McLees is the Founder of HumanSkills.AI and is on a mission to help millions of people flourish in the AI Economy. He is a thought leader in Generative AI's impact on people, work, and learning. His frameworks are pivotal in helping organizations across various industries and academic institutions build AI Agility.

Todd's organization partners with more than 100 institutions of Higher Education and Industry Partners throughout the United States.

Todd offers insightful, forward-thinking perspectives to a global audience. He is deeply committed to advancing the way we build uniquely human skills required for the AI economy and helping people build healthy habits and sustainable practices when working with AI tools to proactively manage the associated risks to well-being.

He serves on several boards in Industry, and the advisory board of CAEL, the Council for Adult and Experiential Learning, and is a founding member of Wisconsin's Higher Education Regional Alliance. He was recognized by LinkedIn as a Top Voice on Artificial Intelligence in 2023 and 2024 and is a contributor to the Harvard Business Review.



**ROSS RAMSEY**

Ross Ramsey co-founded The Texas Tribune in 2009 and served as its executive editor until his retirement in 2022, speaking and writing regular columns on politics, government, and public policy. Before joining the Tribune, he was editor and co-owner of Texas Weekly, reporting on the state government and the politicians running it. In the mid-1990s, he did a 28-month stint in government with the Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts. Before that, he reported for the Houston Chronicle's Austin Bureau, for the Dallas Times Herald (on the business desk in Dallas and later, as Austin bureau chief), as a Dallas-based freelancer for regional and national magazines and newspapers, and for radio stations in Denton and Dallas. He's now a writer, speaker, and consultant, based in Austin.



**MUDDASSIR SIDDIQI**

Dr. Muddassir Siddiqi is the Vice Chancellor of Instructional Innovation & Digital Strategy at Houston Community College (HCC). He previously served as president of the HCC Central College for seven years. Before joining HCC, he served as president, provost, and dean of workforce programs at Illinois community colleges. Prior to his higher education career, Dr. Siddiqi worked for multinational corporations in the manufacturing and engineering sectors. During his community college tenure, Dr. Siddiqi spearheaded collaborative and progressive initiatives with local high schools, four-year institutions, businesses, industry partners, and community organizations to foster greater opportunities for students.

He holds a Doctorate in Education in Adult Education from Northern Illinois University, a Master's in Industrial Technology from Illinois Institute of Technology, and a Bachelor of Science in Electrical Engineering from NED University of Engineering and Technology. His research focuses on the impact of disruptive technologies, specifically Artificial Intelligence and the Metaverse, on student learning experiences and administrative efficiencies in higher education.

Dr. Siddiqi has served on several non-profit boards, demonstrating his commitment to community service and engagement. He is a prolific writer and speaker on disruptive technologies and consistently presents at national and international conferences.



## MICHELLE SINGH

Dr. Michelle Singh serves as the inaugural Assistant Commissioner of the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board's Division of Digital Learning. Singh is a strategic visionary with expertise in ecosystem approaches to successful digital infusion, artificial intelligence, open education, and effective change management strategies. She has been recognized globally for her contribution to the field of digital innovation, micro-credentialing, open education and is an active advocate for adapting to innovation.

Throughout Dr. Singh's 20-plus year tenure in higher education, she has been honored with accolades and awards for her contribution to the advancement of the field of digital teaching and learning including induction into the Texas Digital Learning Association Hall of Fame, the Texas Association of State Systems for Computing and Communications Trailblazer Honor, the USDLA International Outstanding Leadership Award, the TxDLA Don Foshee Leadership Award and Outstanding Commitment to Excellence and Innovation in Distance Learning. She was also recognized with the TAMUCC College of Education and Human Development Achievement Distinction and received the Corpus Christi Top Under 40 honor in 2020.

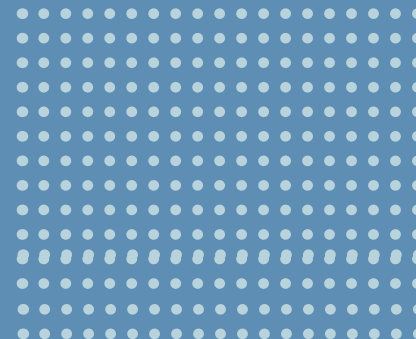
Dr. Singh attained a Bachelor's degree and a Master's degree from the University of Texas-Pan American and a Ph.D. from Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi.



## DAVID TROUTMAN

Dr. David Troutman serves as the Deputy Commissioner of the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB), leading divisions for academic and health affairs, college and career advising, student success, digital learning, and data management and research. With nearly twenty years dedicated to Texas higher education, Dr. Troutman has played a key role in advancing THECB's Building a Talent Strong Texas strategic plan and the Governor's Tri-Agency Workforce Initiative. His previous tenure as Chief Data Officer and Associate Vice Chancellor for Institutional Research and Analysis at the University of Texas System, along with collaborations with the Institute for Higher Education Policy (IHEP) and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation for the Postsecondary Value Commission, have been foundational to his current successes.

Nationally recognized, Dr. Troutman has made significant contributions to higher education policy and data analysis. His collaborative initiatives, especially the founding of the Postsecondary Employment Outcomes Coalition, unite over 30 states in evaluating the economic impact of postsecondary education. His expertise is further acknowledged through advisory roles with the National Student Clearinghouse Research Board and the Carnegie Classification Technical Review Panel, under the American Council on Education (ACE).



# SPONSORS



Cengage



**GREAT WESTERN**  
DINING SERVICE

**Huckabee**

**PARS** ■ PUBLIC AGENCY  
RETIREMENT SERVICES



**Softdocs**

**PARS** is a leading provider of innovative solutions that address many of the organizational and fiscal challenges faced by community college districts and other public agencies.

## Tax-Deferred Separation Incentive Plan (SIP)

An effective approach to reducing labor costs, reorganizing departments and restructuring the workforce in a positive and efficient manner

■  
Achieve fiscal,  
budgetary  
or cash flow  
savings

■  
Reduce number  
of top-of-the-  
salary schedule  
employees

■  
Reduce  
labor costs/  
Restructure  
workforce

■  
Address  
declining  
enrollment  
issues

Other solutions include:

## Alternate Retirement System (ARS)

A cost-saving alternative to Social Security for Part-time, Seasonal, and Temporary (PST) employees

*For more information, please contact:*

**Dion Papafote**  
Senior Manager

✉ [dpapafote@pars.org](mailto:dpapafote@pars.org)

☎ (512) 415-6874

🔗 [www.pars.org](http://www.pars.org)



[TACC.ORG](http://TACC.ORG)