

The Texas Association of Community Colleges

The community colleges of Texas understand that the most critical part of their mission focuses on the success of the students who seek educational opportunities at our institutions. It is this overarching notion that drives colleges, their faculty, and staff around the state to make a difference in the lives of Texans.

The Texas Association of Community Colleges recognizes that colleges must have a partner in the State of Texas to ensure that the success of our students remains the priority. To accomplish this goal, TACC proposes a 5-Point Campaign that asks state leaders to join us in this critical effort.

5-Point Campaign: Legislative Priorities

- Workforce and Skills Alignment
- Measuring and Funding Success
- College Readiness
- Transfer and Articulation
- Texans in Community Colleges

Workforce and Skills Alignment:

Texas community colleges are educating students and building their skills in the industries that are critical to sustaining Texas prosperity. Texas' success depends on an educated workforce that can compete for the jobs of today and tomorrow.

Community colleges play an essential role in the health and prosperity of their local communities, regions, and the state. Providing offerings that link workforce demands to quality educational offerings that meet industry requirements. A key tool in achieving these goals is the Skills Development Fund (SDF).

- Reform the Skills Development Fund to enhance the ability of community colleges to work with multiple employers to better serve students and workforce needs in their regions around the state

The SDF allows a business or trade union to identify a training need, and then partner with a public community college to fill its specific needs. Businesses work with their college partners to submit proposals, develop curricula and conduct training. The SDF pays for the training, the college administers the grant, and businesses create new jobs and improve the skills of their current workers.

- Define clear pathways between high school career and technical education and community college career and technical programs

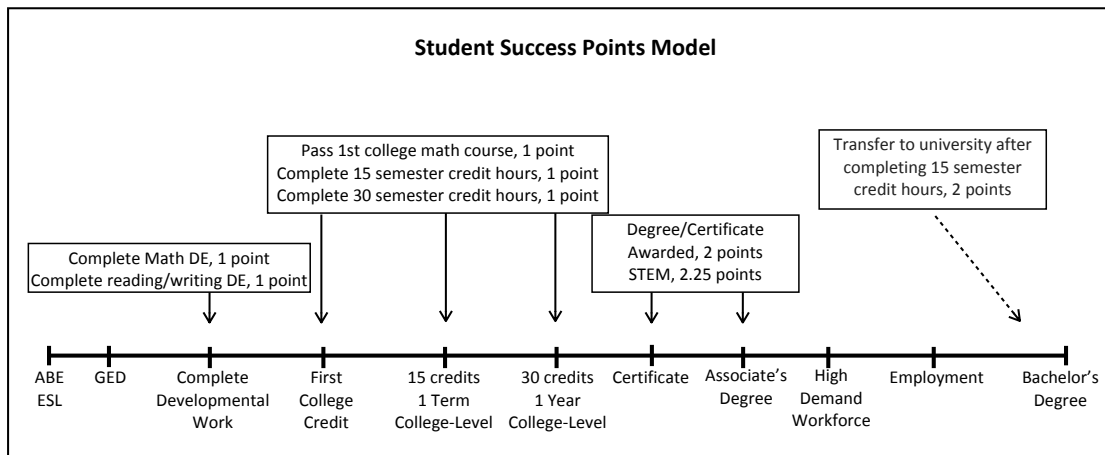
Measuring and Funding Success

Measuring Success

Student success in community colleges consists of effectively meeting the educational goals of students.

Community colleges are committed to increasing student success in Texas regardless of the student's starting point or his/her destination. Building on the Momentum Points work between the Coordinating Board and the community

colleges, TACC recommends a Student Success Points system that recognizes student achievement along a continuum from successful completion of college readiness courses to intermediate success measures to successful outcome metrics. The model also pinpoints area where metrics need to be developed and then included in the measurement of student success (e.g., ABE and High Demand Workforce metrics).

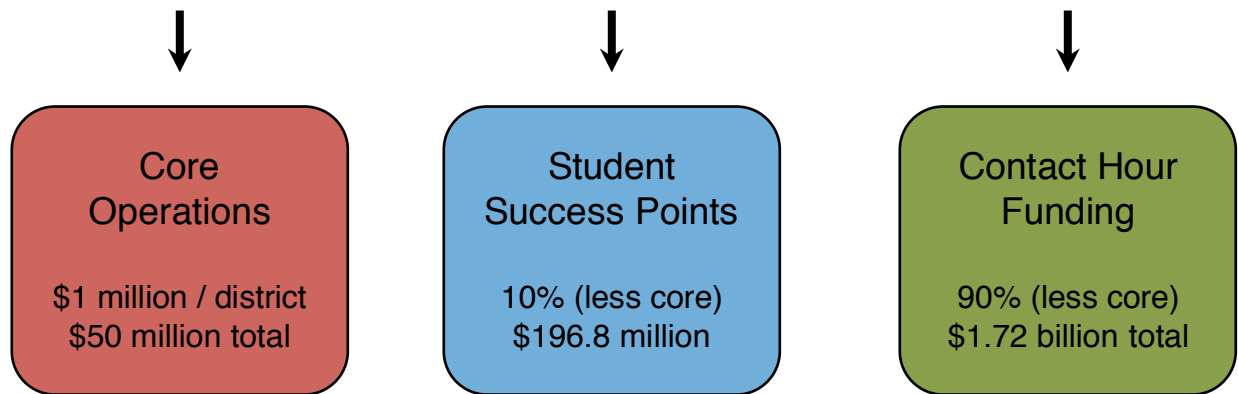


Funding Success

For colleges to be capable of effectively serving students, their communities, and the state they must be funded adequately. TACC believes there is a need to create a new way for the state to fund our institutions. To best accomplish the goal of student success, state funding should be broken down into three different components:

- **Core college operations:** All colleges have basic operating costs regardless of geographic location or institutional size. (This funding would be set aside before other two funding elements).
- **Student Success Points:** Ten percent of funding (less core operations) should be based on the metrics recommended in the Student Success Points.
- **Contact hour:** Ninety percent of state funding (less core operations) for colleges should be based on the number of instructional contact hours each college generates.

\$1.968 Billion Student Success Appropriations Request



Restoration of Employee Health Insurance Funding

- Request the restoration of employee Health Insurance Funding to 60% of costs, return to 84% of costs in the 84th session

Student success cannot be achieved without quality faculty and support staff. Colleges must be able to recruit and retain such talent, which requires providing excellent employee benefits. The state must remain our partners in providing these benefits to our employees in a way that is cost effective for the college and employees.

College Readiness (K-12 Alignment/Developmental Education)

Working to prepare students who are not college-ready to succeed is critical to in achieving their long-term educational goals. Community colleges provide the vast majority of developmental education in Texas and they recognize that major changes must be made in how this critical content is designed and delivered.

- Request funding for the University of Texas at Austin for a special item to support the Dana Center in developing and implementing the New Mathways Project

Math is often an obstacle to the completion of a certificate or degree, with many students being placed in developmental math classes. In Texas, students who are referred to developmental education are almost 50%

less likely to graduate or transfer forward. The New Mathways Project is a system of innovative mathematics courses and student support services that will help students earn college-level math credit more quickly. The project is a systemic approach to developmental education reform that will allow students to take math courses that align with their majors and future jobs.

- Develop and require a Student Success course for all entering students eligible for state funding

The ability of students to be successful in college can be greatly impacted by providing a course specifically focused on developing skills that help students achieve their educational goals.

- Request additional funding for Starlink to provide professional development for faculty to engage in Student Success initiative

Professional development for faculty and staff will play a critical role in the success of these initiatives. Starlink connects all of the community and technical colleges in the state through its statewide teleconference network. Starlink has produced and distributed 285 professional development and informational videoconferences targeted primarily to community and technical colleges.

Transfer and Articulation

Community college students have the opportunity to develop skills and define individual success, preparing them for the workforce or transfer to a college or university. Currently, the system of articulation agreements in Texas creates a complex web that produces uncertainty and unevenness in the ability of students to transfer.

In order to address these concerns TACC has developed a set of principles and recommendations that emphasize the value and importance of the Associate Degree and the need to have a rational state-wide transfer articulation agreement.

State policymakers should recognize the value of the Associate Degree:

- Reduced cost to the state
- Associate degree completion increases baccalaureate degree completion

- Student has marketable degree

The complexity of the transfer system in Texas requires a state-level policy:

- Local colleges/universities have worked out networks of transfer agreements that clarify required courses.
- However, a complex web of transfer agreements disadvantage students not benefited by statewide transfer relationships.
- The necessity for students to retake courses not acceptable to the university is costly to students and state.
- Negotiating transfer agreements is often time consuming and the multiplicity of agreements difficult to administer.

The reduced time for Pell eligibility requires full application of all courses for transfer to a college/university.

A state-wide articulation agreement, rather than individual college to university agreements, will improve student transfer and therefore student advising will be enhanced and students will be less likely to waste their own and state money.

- Recommend a clear and direct pathway for each program become universal in Texas through statewide-adopted common core and fields of study curricula that leads to the Associate Degree
- Recommend an incentive system for the completion of the Associate Degree that rewards students, community colleges and universities

Students - Change in the priority model for Texas Grants and encourage universities to create scholarship programs for Associate degree completers.

Community Colleges – Gains in funding through Student Success Points metrics.

Universities – Additional state funding for enrolling students who have completed the Associate Degree.

Texans in Community Colleges

Community colleges offer a diverse array of educational opportunities for students at all skill levels and from every corner of Texas. Our students represent the face of Texas today and the face of the Texas of tomorrow including traditional-age students, those returning for new workforce skills, Veterans seeking to reenter the workforce, and many more.

Adult Basic Education

Community colleges are a primary provider of ABE opportunities across Texas. This is part of the state directed mandate for our colleges in Sec. 130.0011 of the Education code, which requires community colleges in Texas to be open enrollment institutions. We recognize the need to serve these students but suggest several key recommendations to make ABE more efficient and effective.

- Recommend the State provide sufficient funding for ABE

Texas currently serves slightly more than 100,000 students through ABE providers across the state. However, that is a small fraction of the more than 3 million eligible for ABE. This can be traced directly to the low level of state funding for this critical opportunity for so many Texans.

- Recommend the state oversight of ABE be moved from the Texas Education Agency to the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board

Texas needs better alignment with Developmental Ed, Continuing Ed, and Credit programs of study. When ABE is offered on college campus, there is a powerful “place” effect for students to learn about college and see themselves as college students.

Financial Aid

The ability to afford college opportunities is an issue that many students struggle to overcome. In Texas, less than ten percent of all grant aid to community college students comes from the state of Texas. But these dollars can be critical in allowing a student to pay for their education.

- Endorse the recommendation of the Sunset Commission to remove all two-year institutions from participation in the B-On-Time loan program and transfer the funding for public two-year institutions to the Texas Educational Opportunity Grant program
- Recommend increased flexibility for community college financial aid directors to move funds between state financial aid programs thereby allowing them to direct funds in the most efficient manner