
Legislative Priorities 2007

Texas Association of Community Colleges



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Legislative Priorities

Appropriations - Community and Technical Colleges are essential to the economic health of Texas. In order to continue to fulfill the mission of providing quality higher education and workforce preparation for all Texans, the 80th Legislature must adopt the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board's Formula recommendation. This additional funding in FY 2008-09 is necessary for community colleges to meet the state's policy goals set forth in *Closing the Gaps*.

Employee Benefits - In order to provide an excellent educational experience for all students, community colleges must hire and retain talented and dedicated faculty and staff. Preservation of quality employee benefits is critically important to retention. The 80th Legislature must maintain its historical commitment to Texas Community Colleges by funding employee benefits, including adjustments for inflation and rising costs.

Community colleges are critical to guaranteeing the future success of the state's economy. By serving as the gateway to higher education in Texas, community colleges offer access to education that leads to economic benefits for the state. Texans educated at the community college are the backbone of the workforce and the pipeline to increased university enrollments. Job and economic growth in Texas depends on our state's ability to deliver a trained and educated workforce. Texas can only be as successful as its community colleges.

Texas community colleges are committed to our mission. Over 270,000 students come to our campuses each year to take workforce education courses that will enhance their job skills. Many of these courses are specifically designed for a Texas company or business. Hospitals and medical facilities depend on community colleges to supply a majority of their nursing and allied health staff.

*Community
Colleges enroll
more than one million
students each year.*

Many of our students are the first persons in their family to attend college – fostering the development of the future middle class. Community colleges are aware of the public

school teacher shortage and are gearing-up both traditional and alternative programs to help meet this need. Community college students come from all walks of life and represent the diversity of Texas.

When adjusted for inflation, state per student funding for community colleges has fallen over the past five years by more than 35%.

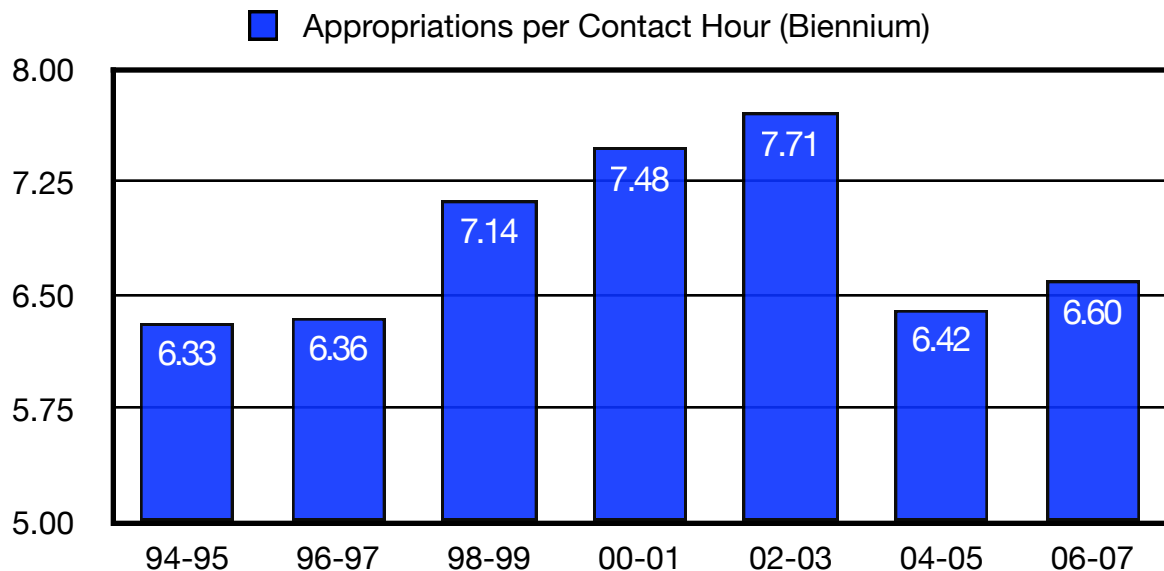
At a time when our colleges are asked to do more in order to *Close the Gaps*, the state of Texas is contributing less. Only 52 percent of the community college funding formula was funded this biennium. This was an increase from the previous biennium, but falls short of meeting the needs of the state's colleges. By underfunding the formula the state has placed colleges in the position of seeking increased funding from other, already strained sources. This dynamic has led to increases in student tuition, potentially limiting access to those who seek a better life through higher education or workforce training.

Among the key elements to quality higher education are talented faculty and staff. Colleges seek each day to recruit and retain faculty who provide excellence in the classroom. Colleges must also seek staff who can provide quality service to students. In order to compete for these quality employees, colleges must provide comprehensive employee benefits. During the 79th Legislative session, there was an effort to remove the state's historical commitment to our employees. This method, commonly referred to as "proportionality," would further limit community colleges in their efforts to provide higher education to all Texans.

Appropriations

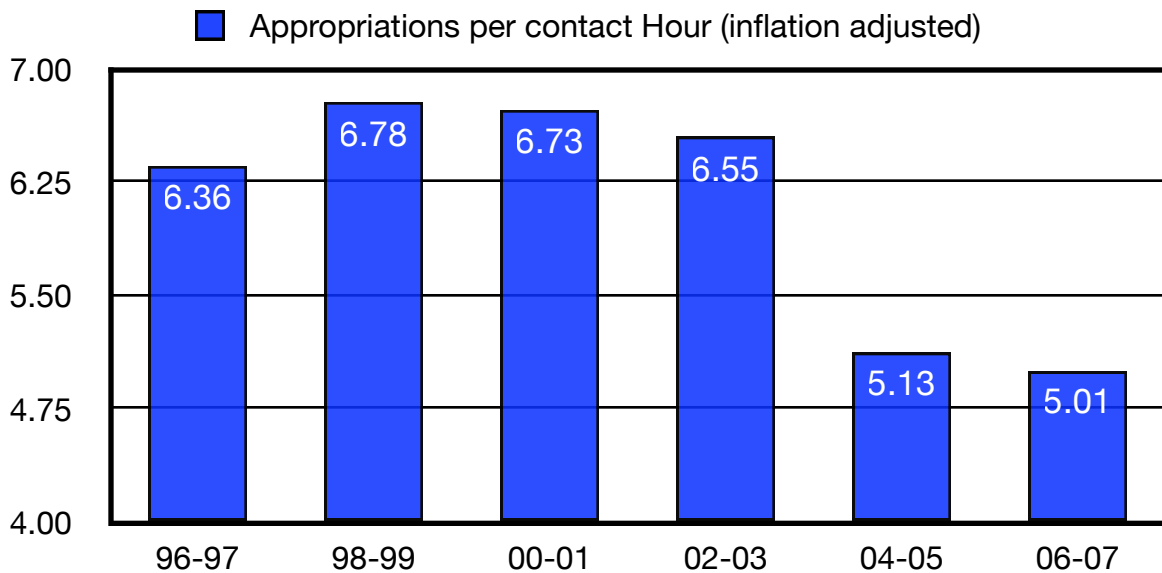
Community and Technical Colleges are essential to the economic health of Texas. In order to continue to fulfill the mission of providing quality higher education and workforce preparation for all Texans, the 80th Legislature must adopt the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board's Formula recommendation. This additional funding in FY 2008-09 is necessary for community colleges to meet the state's policy goals set forth in Closing the Gaps.

Community colleges are essential to the state's efforts in meeting the goals of Closing the Gaps. The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board has recognized this fact by recommending that the Community College formula be fully funded less the amount colleges receive for tuition and fees. This would mean a significant increase in funding for Community Colleges for the 2008-2009 biennium. The chart below gives some historical context to Community College funding over the past ten years.



- The 2006-07 appropriation per contact hour is \$6.60, which is only 4.2% more than the amount appropriated in 1994-95.
- The current biennium's appropriation is 14.4% less than the highest level of state funding, which occurred in the 2002-03 biennium and was 67.4% of full formula.

- When inflation over the last decade is taken into account, the appropriation per contact hour for FY 2006-07 is \$5.01. This represents a decrease of 21.2 percent over the past ten years.



Community College Revenue Sources

The 1969 Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board Report *Challenge for Excellence: A Blueprint for Progress in Higher Education*, laid the ground work for the arrangement between local communities and the state. The plan called for communities to create or expand their tax base in order “to provide adequate bases for capital outlay and maintenance.” The state was to provide funds for instructional costs, “through an approved formula system.” Instructional costs are the largest part of college budgets. On average, these costs represent more than 62% of total college expenditures.

- State Appropriations
- Local Taxes
- Tuition & Fees
- Other

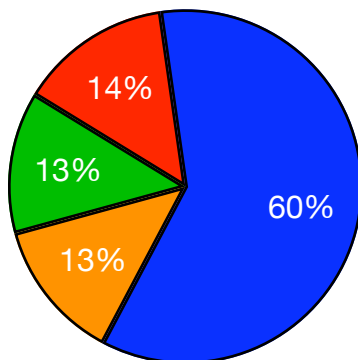


Figure 1. Total Community College Revenue FY1984

This historical arrangement can be seen in Figure 1. In 1984, the state provided 60% of community college revenue with the remaining funding coming equally from local taxes, tuition and fees, and other sources.

Over the next several decades this funding split began to erode with the state reducing its share of funding. Today, this historic relationship between the state and local colleges has become fractured. In Figure 2, it is clear that the state's reduction in appropriations has forced community colleges to find other revenue to fund operations.

Since 1984, the state's share of community college funding has fallen by more than half, students and local taxpayers have been asked to make up the difference.

This trend has been especially pronounced given the budget reductions of the 78th Legislature, which

moved per contact hour funding to levels equal to that of a decade earlier. This series of reductions also occurred during a time that colleges have seen record enrollment increases and rising costs.

● State Appropriations ● Local Taxes
● Tuition & Fees ● Other

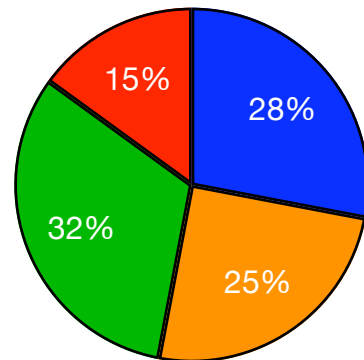


Figure 2. Total Community College Revenue FY2005

Colleges recognize that students at two-year institutions are highly sensitive to increases in tuition. Research has shown that rising tuition can lead to declining enrollments in community colleges. Given the community college mission, such increases in costs can be counter productive to increasing enrollments. Colleges also realize that asking for tax rate increases is often not a feasible option. Taxpayers are willing to support their local colleges but they are less willing to bear the additional costs being passed-on due to the state's retreat from its funding obligation.

The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board's current formula recommendations call for fully funding the community college formula less the amount colleges receive for tuition and fees.

● State Appropriations ● Local Taxes
● Tuition & Fees ● Other

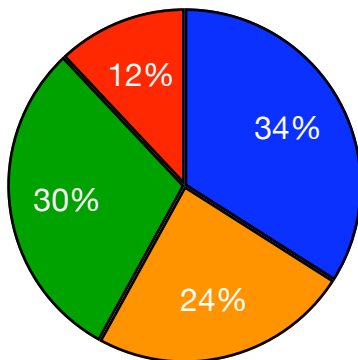


Figure 3. Total Community College Revenue Assuming CB Recommendations

Figure 3 shows the impact of the recommendations on total community college revenue. This funding level would be a step in the right direction of restoring the historical and more equitable arrangement between local colleges and the state.

By a return to such funding, the state and community colleges could ensure that students and taxpayers would not bear an ever-growing share of college funding. By keeping tuition costs low, colleges will have the ability to continue to assist the state in its efforts to enroll more students and Close the Gaps.

Employee Benefits

In order to provide an excellent educational experience for all students, community colleges must hire and retain talented and dedicated faculty and staff. Preservation of quality employee benefits is critically important to retention. The 80th Legislature must maintain its historical commitment to Texas Community Colleges by funding employee benefits, including adjustments for inflation and rising costs.

During the 79th Legislative session, the amount of the state's contribution to community college group health insurance became an issue. This concept of expanded proportionality would erode the historical arrangement between the state and local communities. The state must continue to fulfill its responsibility to Community College faculty and staff. This obligation must include adjustments for the increasing costs associated with employee benefits.

According to the Comptroller's Benefits Proportional by Fund Report the state currently funds 52.6% of total employee benefits while local community colleges fund 47.6%.

The proposed methodology used to calculate proportionality excludes benefits other than group healthcare paid by the local community college. It is crucial that the local funds used to pay employee benefits be recognized by the Legislature.

TACC believes the state is responsible for providing group health insurance benefits to all employees involved with the educational program at our colleges.

- Even though it was financially painful, TACC supports the action of the 78th Legislature which removed physical plant employees from the state's obligation.
- TACC does not support any proposal which would define the state's responsibility for employee health benefits as a portion of the state's contribution to our colleges (currently 28 percent).

Other Funding Issues

- TACC proposes that any public community college that experiences a decrease of more than 5 percent in contact hour funding from one biennium to the next shall be held harmless from the actual dollar loss in excess of 5 percent.
- The 80th Legislature should increase funding for the Texas Educational Opportunity Grant Program from less than \$10 million biennially to \$50 million, making it the cornerstone financial aid program for students at community colleges. Students who complete the Associates degree, or the common core, and transfer to a four year institution would then move to B-on-Time or other self-help program for the last two years of their undergraduate education. The 80th Legislature should also significantly increase the appropriation for Texas Grant allowing community colleges more flexibility in meeting student unmet need.
- The 80th Legislature should increase the appropriation of the Skills Development Fund to \$50 million.
- The 80th Legislature should fund contact hour enrollment at all new campuses that open during the 2008-09 biennium.
- The 80th Legislature should provide funding for Alternative Teacher Certification programs at community colleges.
- The 80th Legislature should provide a small institution supplement for small rural colleges consistent with the funding eligibility for the Texas State Technical College System and the Lamar State institutions. In addition, the funding floor for small rural colleges should continue.
- The 80th Legislature should continue the funding of STARLINK. TACC requests the identification of a separate strategy for the Virtual College of Texas (VCT) within the Coordinating Board bill pattern. Funding levels for STARLINK and VCT should be those requested by the Coordinating Board.
- TACC maintains its position in opposition to the creation of new special items for community colleges.

Texas Public Community Colleges

- ★ There are 50 community college districts in Texas.
- ★ 95 percent of the state's population is in a community college service area.
- ★ All Texas community colleges are open admissions institutions.
- ★ A locally elected board of trustees governs each community college district.

Role and Mission of Texas Public Community Colleges

- ★ The Legislature has clearly defined the role and mission of the state's 50 community college districts.

Each college shall be a two-year institution primarily serving its local taxing district and service area and offering vocational, technical, and academic courses for certification or associate degrees. Continuing education, remedial and compensatory education consistent with open-admission policies, and programs of counseling and guidance shall be provided. Each college shall insist on excellence in all academic areas.

Education Code, §130.0011

- ★ Consistent with the multifaceted mission of the community college, the goals for attending a community college are almost as varied as the students who attend. Community college students seek:
 - To obtain the first two years of a baccalaureate education
 - To earn a certificate or degree in a specific career program, leading to a job upon completion of the program
 - To upgrade work skills
 - To obtain technical knowledge
 - To improve basic skills
 - To pursue personal interests
- ★ The intent of students enrolling in community and technical colleges in Fall 2005 is as follows:
 - Obtain an Associate's Degree: 41.3 percent
 - Transfer to a 4-year University: 33.7 percent
 - Obtain a Technical Certificate: 5.4 percent
 - Improve Job Skills: 5.7 percent
 - Personal Enrichment: 5.3 percent
 - Unknown: 8.6 percent

Enrollment

- ★ Community colleges enroll 46 percent of the state's higher education students making community colleges the largest sector of higher education. The chart below reports semester length courses for the fall semester only.

Texas Higher Education Enrollment, Fall 2005

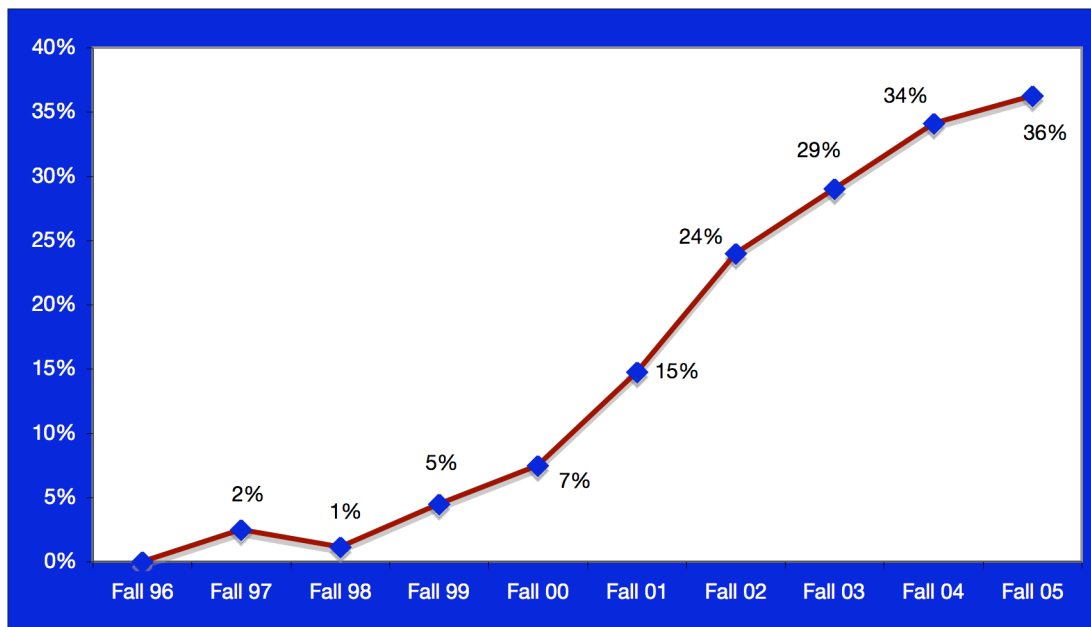
	Fall 2005 Enrollment	% of Total Enrollment
Public Community Colleges*	547,717	46.2%
Public Universities	484,999	40.9%
Independent Colleges & Univ.	117,029	9.9%
Health Institutions (all)	18,319	1.5%
Texas State Technical College*	11,010	.9%
Lamar Two-Year*	7,344	.6%
TOTAL	1,186,418	100.0%

Source: Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board

*Includes students in semester-length courses only

- ★ Community college enrollment has increased by over 145,000 students since Fall 1996. In Fall 1996, 401,957 students were enrolled in community colleges. As indicated in the chart above, 547,717 students were enrolled in community colleges in Fall 2005. This represents a 36 percent increase in fall enrollment (see chart below).

Percent Change in Community College Fall Enrollment: 1996-2005



Source: Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board

- ★ Community college enrollment figures almost double when non-semester courses are considered and student enrollment is reported for the entire academic year. The chart below shows that over one million students passed through the doors of Texas public community colleges. The figures do not include students who enroll for non-credit, non-reimbursed continuing education courses. (See chart on next page for complete enrollment information.)

Community College Enrollment, Academic Year 2004-05

	Unduplicated # of students	% of total
Academic Credit Courses	514,821	48.9%
Technical Credit Courses	296,821	28.2%
Non-Credit Workforce Education	240,570	22.9%
TOTAL	1,052,212	100.0%

Source: Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board

- ★ Increasing community college enrollment is a key component to the Coordinating Board's *Closing the Gaps* initiative. The Coordinating Board reported that 67 percent of the state's enrollment growth for Fall 2005 occurred at two-year institutions.
- ★ In July 2006, the Coordinating Board reported that even though enrollment has increased at Texas higher education institutions since 2000, "the state is not on track to meet the participation goal of Closing the Gaps" (p. 3, *Closing the Gaps by 2015: 2006 Progress*). 70 percent of the new students to Texas higher education are expected to enroll in a public community college. In order for the community colleges to meet these high expectations, sufficient state funds must be provided.

Enrollment at Community Colleges

College District	Fall 2005 Semester Enrollment	Academic Year 2004-05			
		AY 2004-05 Total	Credit Academic	Credit Technical	Non-Credit Workforce
Alamo	48,958	77,448	44,994	24,559	7,895
Alvin	3,828	8,183	4,471	1,677	2,035
Amarillo	10,391	31,384	7,249	6,652	17,483
Angelina	4,756	10,668	3,612	3,459	3,597
Austin	30,499	57,872	30,966	21,806	5,100
Blinn	14,351	25,637	18,392	3,809	3,436
Brazosport	3,604	6,317	3,219	1,760	1,338
Central Texas	8,704	26,847	11,441	10,607	4,799
Cisco	3,494	5,629	3,899	1,512	218
Clarendon	1,116	1,532	864	560	108
Coastal Bend	3,353	7,333	3,500	1,831	2,002
College of the Mainland	3,992	9,741	3,976	2,066	3,699
Collin	18,221	39,117	23,264	4,477	11,376
Dallas	58,421	126,269	37,005	51,846	37,418
Del Mar	11,889	20,428	8,065	8,019	4,344
El Paso	24,239	40,906	27,064	8,051	5,791
Frank Phillips	1,207	7,493	1,244	486	5,763
Galveston	2,215	4,112	2,216	1,308	588
Grayson	3,715	7,077	2,961	2,464	1,652
Hill	3,084	5,928	798	3,614	1,516
Houston	35,595	81,784	36,226	27,574	17,984
Howard	2,838	11,485	1,349	2,713	7,423
Kilgore	4,815	12,900	3,931	3,005	5,964
Laredo	8,169	15,995	6,643	5,634	3,718
Lee	4,576	9,822	3,667	5,040	1,115
McLennan	7,638	15,949	6,470	5,118	4,361
Midland	5,584	13,744	4,761	3,524	5,459
Navarro	6,359	11,120	5,725	2,655	2,740
North Central Texas	6,967	10,824	7,677	2,189	958
North Harris Montgomery	43,085	64,176	45,589	10,964	7,623
Northeast Texas	2,507	4,840	2,494	1,122	1,224
Odessa	4,788	13,113	3,534	2,727	6,852
Panola	1,922	3,436	1,474	1,131	831
Paris	4,264	7,631	4,339	1,291	2,001
Ranger	758	1,353	1,147	144	62
San Jacinto	26,710	38,203	21,830	10,588	5,785
South Plains	9,233	15,100	4,478	8,622	2,000
South Texas	16,233	25,953	14,811	8,675	2,467
Southwest Texas	5,067	8,829	4,875	1,965	1,989
Tarrant	38,588	65,090	47,695	4,563	12,832
Temple	3,897	8,975	4,344	1,765	2,866
Texarkana	3,682	10,079	2,773	2,934	4,372
Texas Southmost	10,517	13,645	9,027	3,868	750
Trinity Valley	5,658	10,725	4,922	4,112	1,691
Tyler	9,265	18,796	8,089	4,614	6,093
Vernon	2,784	7,170	896	3,163	3,111
Victoria	3,980	8,779	3,588	1,900	3,291
Weatherford	4,437	8,566	4,348	1,947	2,271
Western Texas	1,756	4,474	2,408	393	1,673
Wharton	6,008	9,735	6,511	2,318	906
TOTAL	547,717	1,052,212	514,821	296,821	240,570

Source: Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board

Community College Student Profile

- ★ The average age for a community college student is 25.
- ★ Female students comprise 59 percent of the enrollment at community colleges.
- ★ 75 percent of the freshmen and sophomores in Texas public higher education enroll in community colleges.
- ★ 78 percent of minority freshmen and sophomores attending public institutions of higher education are attending Texas public community colleges.
- ★ Community college students reflect the ethnic diversity of Texas.

Ethnicity	CC Enrollment (Fall 2005)	Texas Population (2004)
White	49%	50%
Hispanic	32%	35%
African American	11%	11%
Other	8%	4%

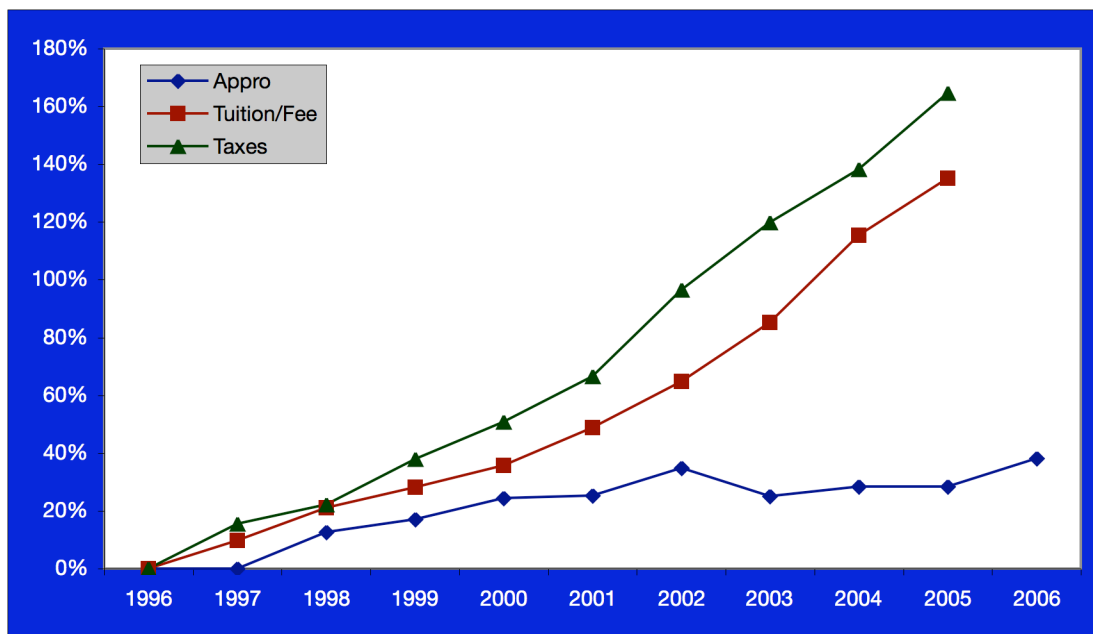
Source: Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, Texas State Data Center

- ★ 66 percent of the students attending community colleges enroll on a part-time basis.
- ★ 37 percent of the state's community college students received need-based financial aid from federal and state programs; 205,238 community college students received \$477.4 million in FY 2005.
 - Pell Grant and other federal programs: \$458.1 million (96% of total)
 - Texas Grant: \$14.8 million (3% of total)
 - Texas Educational Opportunity Grant: \$4.5 million (1% of total)
- ★ Other financial assistance to community college students:
 - Over \$35 million raised locally each year by college districts for scholarships and student assistance.
 - Work Study: 9,378 students; \$14.4 million.
 - Student Loans: 71,514 students; \$176.1 million.
- ★ 77 percent of community college students are employed while attending college.

Sources of Revenue

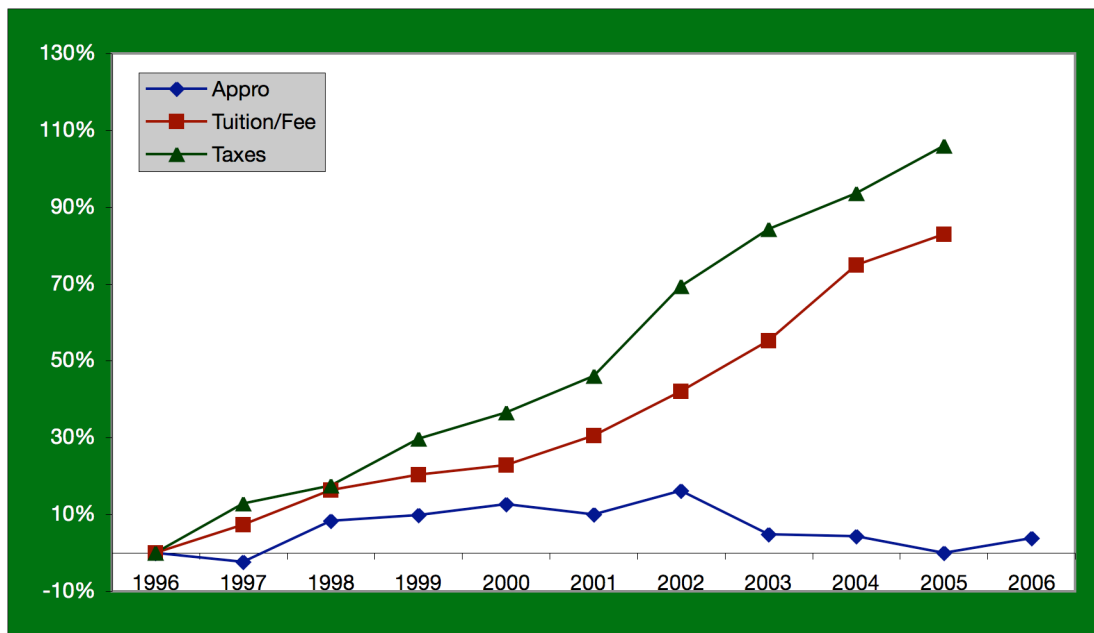
- ★ State funds and local funds are the main sources of revenue for Texas' public community colleges. State funds are appropriated by the Legislature based on the community and technical college funding formula. Community college boards raise local funds through tuition and fees and property taxes to defray the expenses associated with construction and maintenance of the physical plant.
- ★ The state's share of community college funding in FY 2005 was 32 percent; in FY 1984 the state's share was 60 percent.
- ★ Providing for community colleges has been a shared responsibility among the state, local taxpayers, and community college students.
- ★ Since 1996, the formula appropriation has increased 38 percent, tuition and fees have increased 135 percent, and property tax revenue has increased 164 percent.

Percent Change of Community College Revenue: 1996-2006



- ★ Taking inflation into account, the formula appropriation has increased 4 percent, tuition and fees have increased 83 percent, and property tax revenue has increased 106 percent since 1996.

Percent Change of Community College Revenue: 1996-2006
(Adjusted for Inflation using the CPI)

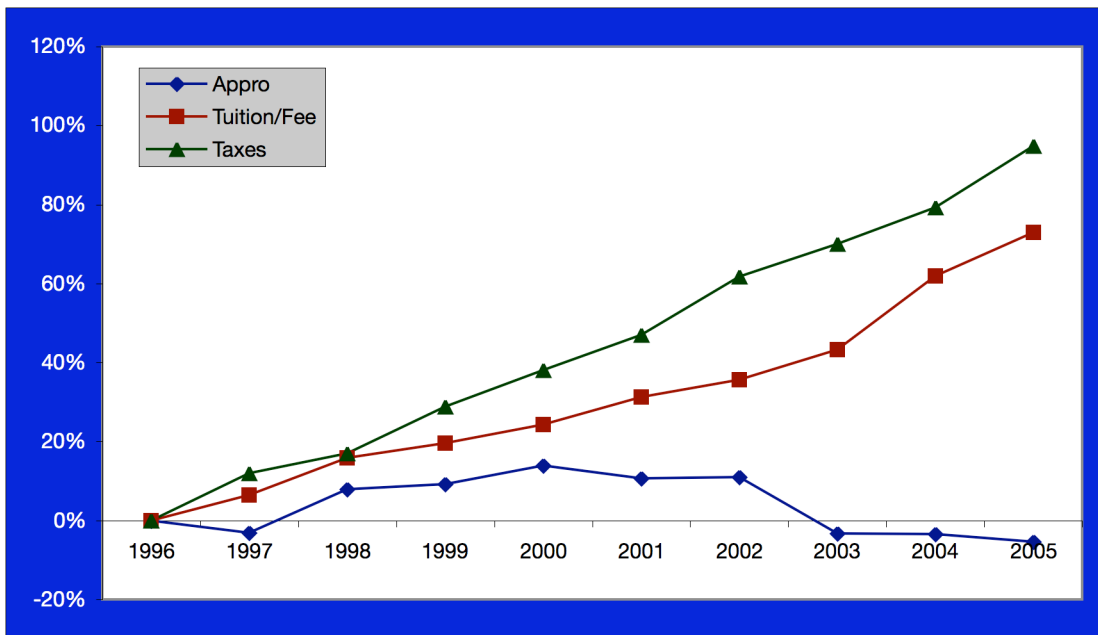


- ★ The funding formula for community colleges is largely based on the number of contact hours generated.
 - During the decade of the 1990's, community college base year contact hours increased 16 percent.
 - From 2000 to 2005, base year contact hours increased 26 percent. This rapid increase coincides with the implementation of *Closing the Gaps*.
- ★ Since 1996, the revenue dollars per contact hour (ch) have changed as follows:
 - Formula Appropriation: \$3.24/ch in 1996 to \$3.07/ch in 2005
 - Tuition and Fees: \$1.82/ch in 1996 to \$3.15/ch in 2005
 - Property Taxes: \$1.87/ch in 1996 to \$3.65/ch in 2005

- ★ Using constant 1996 dollars, the revenue dollars per contact hour (ch) have changed as follows:
 - Formula Appropriation: \$3.24/ch in 1996 to \$2.39/ch in 2005
 - Tuition and Fees: \$1.82/ch in 1996 to \$2.45/ch in 2005
 - Property Taxes: \$1.87/ch in 1996 to \$2.84/ch in 2005

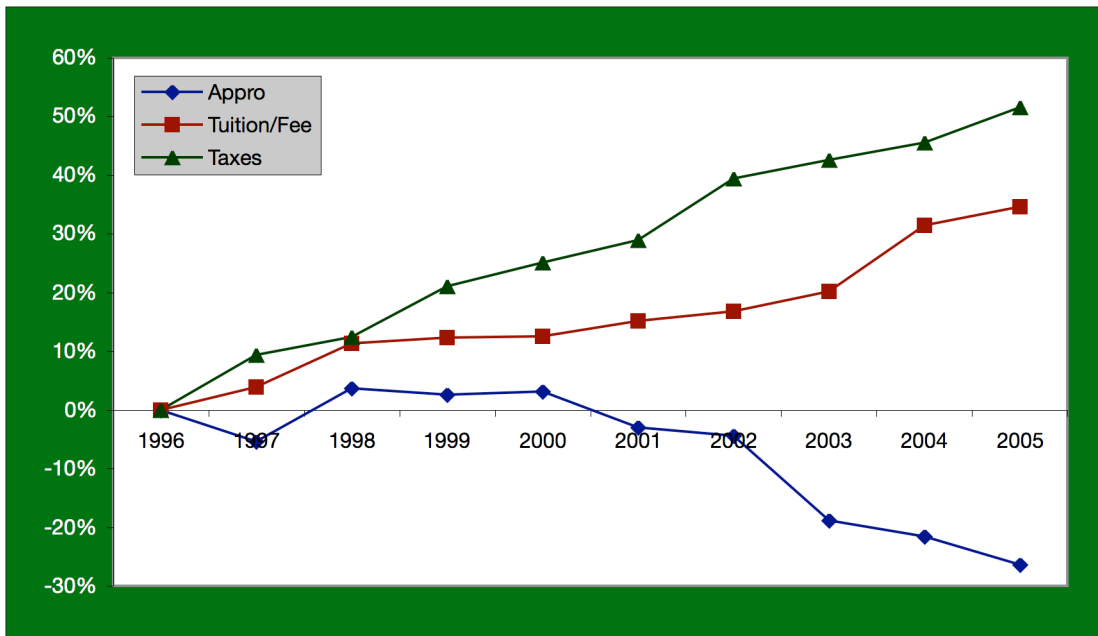
- ★ The change in the percentage of each revenue source using the dollar per contact figure since 1996 is as follows:
 - Formula Appropriation: 5 percent decrease
 - Tuition and Fees: 73 percent increase
 - Property Taxes: 95 percent increase

Percent Change of Community College Revenue Per Contact Hour: 1996-2005



- ★ Accounting for inflation, the change in the percentage of each revenue source using the dollar per contact hour figure since 1996 shows the gap between state appropriations and local funds.
 - Formula Appropriation: 26 percent decrease
 - Tuition and Fees: 35 percent increase
 - Property Taxes: 52 percent increase

Percent Change of Community College Revenue Per Contact Hour: 1996-2005
(Adjusted for Inflation using the CPI)



- ★ 20 percent of the college districts in the state are at or near their tax cap limiting their ability to turn to this revenue source to make up for short falls in state funds.

Formula Funding

- ★ For the 2008-09 biennium, TACC fully supports the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board's (THECB) formula request for community and technical colleges. THECB has recommended that the 80th Legislature fully fund the community and technical college formula less the amount colleges receive for tuition and fees.
- ★ TACC estimates that the community college portion of the THECB formula recommendation is \$563.5 million. This projection does not include growth, small institution supplement, critical fields supplement, and funding for alternative teaching certificates included in the THECB formula recommendation.
- ★ The chart below illustrates how the additional funds would be distributed throughout the state. This projection is based upon the contact hour mix and formula rates of the colleges in the last base year (Summer 2004, Fall 2004, and Spring 2005). Estimates will be updated as current base year data is available.

TACC Estimates of THECB Formula Recommendation

CC District	Projected Increase	CC District	Projected Increase
Alamo	46,790,713	McLennan	9,502,704
Alvin	5,088,207	Midland	4,150,609
Amarillo	12,021,585	Navarro	7,573,624
Angelina	6,004,277	North Central Texas	5,583,234
Austin	26,483,151	North Harris Montgomery	35,330,471
Blinn	13,483,014	Northeast Texas	2,742,895
Brazosport	2,144,506	Odessa	6,476,334
Central Texas	13,857,583	Panola	2,351,445
Cisco	3,843,665	Paris	5,358,636
Clarendon	282,565	Ranger	-
Coastal Bend	4,860,791	San Jacinto	25,144,432
College of the Mainland	4,549,171	South Plains	10,273,574
Collin	17,843,424	South Texas	15,111,575
Dallas	61,121,580	Southwest Texas	5,653,546
Del Mar	12,343,527	Tarrant	31,112,532
El Paso	22,619,153	Temple	4,434,632
Frank Phillips	2,010,217	Texarkana	6,392,477
Galveston	957,746	Texas Southmost	8,853,082
Grayson	4,638,028	Trinity Valley	7,908,318
Hill	3,960,437	Tyler	11,417,890
Houston	43,748,350	Vernon	3,890,804
Howard	5,696,358	Victoria	4,314,737
Kilgore	5,986,971	Weatherford	5,591,041
Laredo	9,023,799	Western Texas	1,953,238
Lee	7,189,624	Wharton	5,839,528

- ★ Instructional costs are presented to the Legislature as the community and technical college funding formula.
 - Each community and technical college completes the Report of Fundable Operating Expenses (RFOE, formerly known as the cost study and the All Funds Expenditure Report) that determines the institution's instructional and administrative expenses for 26 funding disciplines.
 - The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board compiles the results of the Report of Fundable Operating Expenses and determines the median cost per student contact hour for each of the 26 instructional fields.
 - The total cost of instruction (i.e., the community and technical college funding formula) is determined by multiplying the median cost for each of the 26 instructional fields with the total number of contact hours generated for each of the 26 instructional fields.

- ★ Any gap between the cost of instruction and the funds provided by the state has to be absorbed by local districts and results in:
 - Deferred maintenance of infrastructure.
 - Increased local taxes.
 - Increased student tuition and fees.

- ★ When the community and technical college formula was developed at the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, the responsibilities of the state and the local college district were clearly identified. The state would assume the responsibility for instruction costs. College districts were "to use local tax funds and tuition for construction and operation of physical plants and maintenance of facilities" (THECB Master Plan, 1969, p. 8).

- ★ It is the position of TACC that the principles outlined in the THECB Master Plan reflect the compact between the state and community colleges. The state will provide funds for instructional costs; the local communities will provide the support for the construction and maintenance of facilities.

Tuition and Fees

- ★ For a student enrolled for 12 semester hours in a community college, tuition and fees are as follows:

Tuition and Fees, 2005-06

	In-District Resident	Out-of-District Resident	Non-Resident
Average Tuition (2005-06)	\$397	\$585	\$1,075
Average Fees (2005-06)	\$220	\$324	\$308
Average Tuition & Fees	\$617	\$909	\$1,383

Source: TACC Survey

- ★ In response to flat state funding, community college tuition and fees have increased. From 2001 to 2005, tuition and fees for in-district residents increased 44 percent. For out-of-district residents, tuition and fees have increased 52 percent during the same time period.

Distance Learning

- ★ Texas community colleges are committed to expanding distance education. Over 80 percent of the enrollments in distance education courses in Texas are at community colleges.
- ★ TACC, through the Texas Community College Education Initiative (TCCEI), oversees two distance learning initiatives: STARLINK and the Virtual College of Texas. Member dues, state appropriations, state grants, federal funds, and private grants support these efforts.
- ★ TACC's Virtual College of Texas (VCT) began operation in Fall 1998. VCT's mission is to provide all Texans access to distance learning courses and programs offered by all VCT member colleges.
 - Since its creation, VCT has served over 27,000 students.
 - 6,740 students enrolled in courses through VCT in FY 2006. VCT offered 1,240 courses in FY 2006.
 - In FY 2006, 44 community college districts and the Texas State Technical College System participated in VCT.
 - \$3.9 million in grants have been awarded to colleges for projects supported by VCT.
 - VCT is currently undergoing a scheduled assessment by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, the regional accrediting agency, to ensure quality of its programs.
 - VCT is formally governed by TACC through a contractual arrangement with Austin Community College .

- ★ STARLINK, a statewide satellite network composed of all Texas community and technical colleges, one university, and 12 out-of-state members produces and distributes a variety of videoconference programs that provide staff development and training for college trustees, administrators, faculty, and staff.
 - STARLINK was established in 1989 with a Perkins State Leadership grant and became a trustee fund at the Coordinating Board in 1997.
 - Since becoming operational in the fall of 1989, STARLINK has been rated as one of the top 3 training networks in the United States by the U.S. Distance Learning Association.
 - STARLINK has produced and/or distributed 150 professional development and informational videoconferences targeted primarily to community and technical colleges, reaching more than 90,000 audience members.
 - In FY 2006, STARLINK provided 6,152 viewers with teleconferencing training and 2,600 viewers with Internet streamed training.
 - STARLINK has produced and/or distributed information and training videoconferences that served over 30,000 employees of state agencies and other public entities.
 - STARLINK is formally governed by TACC through a contractual arrangement with the Dallas County Community College District.

Early College High School

- ★ Through the Texas Community College Education Initiative (TCCEI), TACC oversees and provides leadership for an Early College High School pilot program made possible by the Texas High School Project Fund of Communities Foundation of Texas.
- ★ The Communities Foundation of Texas, supported by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, provided a grant to cover start-up costs for the Early College High School initiative.
- ★ Early College High Schools are autonomous high schools located on a college campus. The high school provides students with the opportunity to complete high school in 4 to 5 years and to complete approximately 60 semester credit hours of collegiate course work. The schools enroll students who have largely been underrepresented in higher education, namely low-income students, students of color, and first generation college goers.
- ★ Early College High Schools are a unique partnership between higher education institutions and public school districts. The TCCEI initiative includes the following partnerships: Del Mar College and Corpus Christi ISD, El Paso Community College and Socorro ISD, Houston Community College System – Southeast College and Houston ISD. All three colleges opened this fall.

Achieving the Dream

- ★ Achieving the Dream is a multiyear national initiative to help more community college students succeed (earn degrees, earn certificates or transfer to other institutions to continue their studies). The initiative is particularly concerned about student groups that have faced the most significant barriers to success, including low-income students and students of color.
- ★ The initiative includes 58 community colleges in nine states (Connecticut, Florida, New Mexico, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Texas, Virginia, and Washington) and 14 national partner organizations.
- ★ TACC, through the Texas Community College Education Initiative (TCCEI), was awarded a grant by Lumina Foundation for Education to focus on strengthening state policies related to student success. The current focus is on accountability and data, developmental education, financial aid, and student affordability.
- ★ Eight Texas colleges were among the initial group of Achieving the Dream colleges when the initiative began in 2004.
 - The colleges include Alamo Community College District, Brookhaven College (Dallas County Community College District), Coastal Bend College, El Paso Community College, Galveston College, Houston Community College System, South Texas College, and Southwest Texas Junior College.
 - Lumina Foundation for Education is providing a 5 year grant for each of these colleges.
- ★ Beginning this year, the Houston Endowment Inc. will provide funds to add seven Houston area community colleges and three open-admission universities to the Achieving the Dream initiative.
 - The Houston area community colleges include Alvin Community College, Brazosport College, College of the Mainland, Lee College, North Harris Montgomery Community College District, San Jacinto College, and Wharton County Junior College.
 - The three universities are Prairie View A&M University, Texas Southern University, and University of Houston-Downtown.
- ★ Achieving the Dream focuses colleges and others on understanding and making better use of data to improve student outcomes.
 - In the Achieving the Dream model, every decision made at a college – from setting educational strategies and allocating resources to scheduling classes and organizing student services – is grounded in data about student outcomes.
 - Central to this work is being open and forthright about current performance; setting measurable goals that consider outcomes of all students; and making lasting, institutional change to achieve them.

The Socioeconomic Benefits Generated by 50 Community College Districts in Texas

by Kjell A. Christophersen & M. Henry Robison
CCBenefits, Inc.

- ★ The study was funded by Houston Endowment Inc. and the 50 community college districts.
- ★ The overall conclusion of the study: community colleges are working for Texas, producing significant returns for the state's economy, students, and taxpayers.

Community Colleges Stimulate the Texas Economy

- ★ Total Economic Impact: \$13.5 billion
- ★ The 50 community college districts account for \$1.9 billion in the Texas economy.
- ★ The 50 community college districts account for an additional \$11.6 billion in wages and salaries generated by former students.
- ★ The total economic impact of the 50 community college districts translates into approximately 351,530 jobs in Texas.

Texas Public Community Colleges Generate a Return on the Government's Investment

- ★ Broad Analysis: \$18 for every dollar invested by state and local government over the next 30 years.
- ★ Narrow Analysis: \$3 per dollar invested.
- ★ Taxpayers see a book rate of return of 15.9-percent on their annual investment and recover all investments in 8.2 years.
- ★ The State of Texas benefits from improved health and reduced welfare, unemployment, and crime, saving the public \$276.3 million per year.

Texas Public Community Colleges Increase the Earnings Potential of Their Students

- ★ For every dollar a student invests in community college education, the student will receive \$9.05 in higher future earnings over the next 30 years.
- ★ Average Rate of Return on Investment in a Community College Education: 26.1-percent.
- ★ Payback period: 5.8 years (time needed to recover costs)

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Texas Public Community and Technical Colleges

Alamo Community College District, <i>San Antonio</i>	Midland College, <i>Midland</i>
Alvin Community College, <i>Alvin</i>	Navarro College, <i>Corsicana</i>
Amarillo College, <i>Amarillo</i>	North Central Texas College, <i>Gainesville</i>
Angelina Community College, <i>Lufkin</i>	North Harris Montgomery Community College District, <i>Houston</i>
Austin Community College, <i>Austin</i>	Northeast Texas Community College, <i>Mt. Pleasant</i>
Blinn College, <i>Brenham</i>	Odessa College, <i>Odessa</i>
Brazosport College, <i>Lake Jackson</i>	Panola College, <i>Carthage</i>
Central Texas College, <i>Killeen</i>	Paris Junior College, <i>Paris</i>
Cisco Junior College, <i>Cisco</i>	Ranger College, <i>Ranger</i>
Clarendon College, <i>Clarendon</i>	San Jacinto College, <i>Pasadena</i>
Coastal Bend College, <i>Beeville</i>	South Plains College, <i>Levelland</i>
College of the Mainland, <i>Texas City</i>	South Texas College, <i>McAllen</i>
Collin County Community College, <i>Plano</i>	Southwest Texas Junior College, <i>Uvalde</i>
Dallas County Community College District, <i>Dallas</i>	Tarrant County College, <i>Fort Worth</i>
Del Mar College, <i>Corpus Christi</i>	Temple College, <i>Temple</i>
El Paso Community College, <i>El Paso</i>	Texarkana College, <i>Texarkana</i>
Frank Phillips College, <i>Borger</i>	Texas Southmost College, <i>Brownsville</i>
Galveston College, <i>Galveston</i>	Texas State Technical College System, <i>Waco</i>
Grayson County College, <i>Denison</i>	Trinity Valley Community College, <i>Athens</i>
Hill College, <i>Hillsboro</i>	Tyler Junior College, <i>Tyler</i>
Houston Community College System, <i>Houston</i>	Vernon College, <i>Vernon</i>
Howard College, <i>Big Spring</i>	Victoria College, <i>Victoria</i>
Kilgore College, <i>Kilgore</i>	Weatherford College, <i>Weatherford</i>
Laredo Community College, <i>Laredo</i>	Western Texas College, <i>Snyder</i>
Lee College, <i>Baytown</i>	Wharton County Junior College, <i>Wharton</i>
McLennan Community College, <i>Waco</i>	