

Fred Hills was part of the quarterly meeting of state association presidents (TCCIA, TACTE, TACE, TARE, TADE) to include Steve Johnson from TACC, Cynthia Ferrell from the Texas Success Center. This is part of an initiative to keep each group informed, especially with what the president's decide in the TACC meetings.

The following is a quick summary of our conversations:

1. Steve Johnson's Legislative update:
 - Steve reported that the TACC meeting last week spent most of its time on two topics – how to handle the recent issue with THECB and their handling of CE reimbursement for dual credit courses for minors and on dual credit. First, he addressed an initiative by TACC and the legislature to better define the role of Continuing Education with supporting high school students/dual credit and how to handle contact hours. This is in response to the audit that led Weatherford and South Texas College to return funds (1 to 3 million each) for contact hours charged for supporting minors in dual credit programs under CE. Steve says this is an ongoing effort led by Senator Juan Hinojosa. This is of special interest to TACE. Steve offered for TACE representatives to help with the wording of the legislation in the coming months. The push is to also restore the wording for CE and dual credit support in the GIPWE.
 - He then addressed dual credit. He stated that the THECB is now engaged on a study through the RAND corporation on the status of dual credit in the state. This study is both quantitative and qualitative with RAND proposing to do focus group with various community colleges across the state. Second, Steve mentioned that UT system and TACC have formed a taskforce to address the P-16 conduit to include dual credit. TACC position with the THECB and the Legislature is we don't have enough information on dual credit to enact more laws in the near term. I asked Steve how TCCIA could be involved and he offered for us to have a seat on the task force. I also asked him what we could do as an organization at this point in advocating our case to the Legislature. He stated that it would be far more productive to work with TACC and the task force in the near term to gather enough information to make a more informed case for this cause. Steve expects the taskforce will take about 6 months.
2. Cynthia then shared information on the Texas Success Center. She pointed out that guided pathways is now the "buzz" in Austin as it has reached the Legislature who are asking about it. TACC and the Texas Success Center have been sending them information and there will be governmental representatives at the Texas Pathway conference at Lost Pines on Nov 2-4. I've attached a summary of the meeting and the ongoing program.
3. Other issues of interest shared by the association presidents:
 - Status of Field of Study and Program of Study
 - Transfer of WECM to THECB
 - Status of Dual Credit
 - Future of block scheduling in the next legislative session
 - CE and student age for college courses
 - How does AEL fit into the pathways discussion
 - Aligning the TABE, GED, TSI and STAARS assessments
 - College readiness and the role/future of developmental education
4. The next quarterly meeting will be on January 30 - 10 AM.