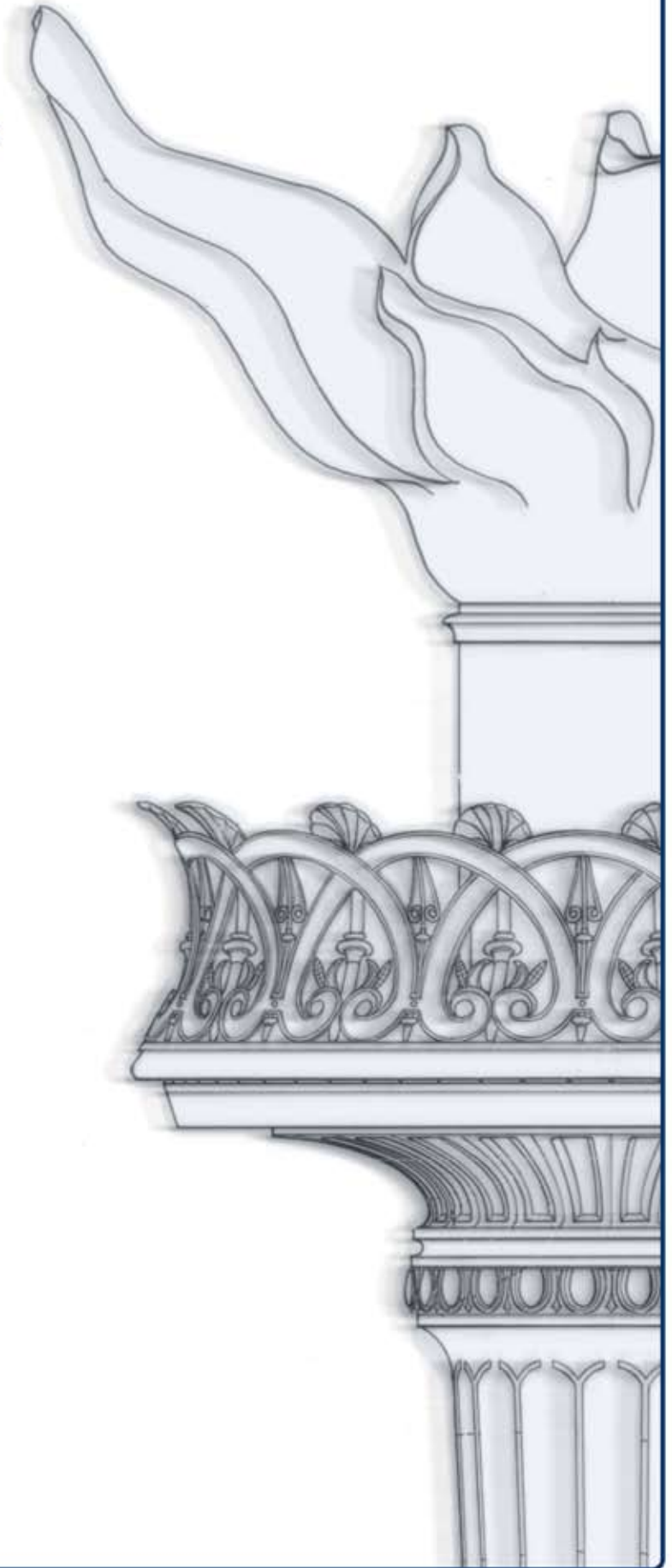


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Texas Association of College Teachers
Defending Academic Freedom
Volume LXII Number 3

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Jan/Feb/March 2009



The TACT Quarterly eBulletin

Jan/Feb/March 2009 - Volume LXII Number 3

In this quarter's TACT newsletter...

- Page 3 Letter from the President
by Dr. Debra Price
- Page 4 Executive Director's Report
by Chuck Hempstead
- Page 5 Legislative Report
by Cindy Simpson
- Page 6 Pictures from the Capitol
- Page 7 Closing the Gaps in Faculty Salaries
by David Castle
- Page 11 GRF Contributors

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The TACT Quarterly eBulletin

Texas Association of College Teachers
Defending Academic Freedom

CONTENTS

Cover Page

Index

**The President's
Column**

**The Executive
Director's Report**

Legislative Report

**Pictures from
the Capitol**

**Closing the Gaps in
Faculty Salaries**

GRF Contributors

**Membership
Application**

**Legislative
First Alerts**

Past eBulletins



Letter from the President

**by Dr. Debra Price
TACT President**

Can't Buy Fire Insurance When the Truck's Back at the Station.

You've heard the old saw about trying to buy flood insurance after the hurricane's passed? I'm often reminded of that when I have the privilege of hearing from our colleagues that TACT should do this, or TACT should do that, or "there oughta' be a law!"

Invariably, when I ask staff if the purveyor of a good idea is a TACT member, the answer is no, or "used to be."

Just like our fabulous membership benefit, the Educators Professional Liability Insurance, the infrastructure – think highway bridge – needs to be in place before we cross the gorge.

O.K., enough analogies. For TACT to remain effective, not only do we need your continued – and very much appreciated – support, we need that of your office mates, department chair, new member of the team and our lapsed members. When I ask TACT members why they initially joined, they invariably respond, "Because someone I respected asked me to," or "This is an investment in my career I can't afford to be without."

Yet, when times are tough, it is easy for us to think first of our disciplinary associations. But they may not provide the liability insurance we all need in this age of litigation, and certainly don't represent us at the Legislature, Coordinating Board, Teacher Retirement System, Department of Insurance (think ORP), boards of regents, or where ever our quality of life issues – and our opinions regarding higher education policy – are discussed.

Now, the good news is that when we interject our opinions into public policy debates, we are well respected because of the 60-year tradition of TACT being a "special interest group" with a philanthropic bent – our positions always benefit students, taxpayers and the State as a whole. The bad news is that this organizational effort doesn't come free – we employ a staff and registered lobbyist to keep these wheels turning.

Like all other effective organizations, we can't do what it takes to protect your interests while we're in the classrooms. Please recruit a new member today so TACT can enjoy another 60 years of contributions to your profession.

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The TACT Quarterly eBulletin

Texas Association of College Teachers
Defending Academic Freedom

CONTENTS

Cover Page

Index

**The President's
Column**

**The Executive
Director's Report**

Legislative Report

**Pictures from
the Capitol**

**Closing the Gaps in
Faculty Salaries**

GRF Contributors

**Membership
Application**

**Legislative
First Alerts**

Past eBulletins



Executive Director's Report

**by Chuck Hempstead
TACT Executive Director**

It's hard to believe that as I write this, the Legislative Session is about forty percent complete. There is lots of work to do. With the election of a new Speaker, the House of Representatives was slow to get organized. The news in the Senate was the "promotion" of Higher Education from a subcommittee to a committee.

The wheels have been difficult to get turning. TACT's now-traditional legislation suggesting an eight-year faculty salary catch-up didn't get traction, so we're building new mousetraps. And you've heard the solution to salary compression? Call your colleague in the next town over, both resign your jobs, and take each other's positions to get a thirty-five percent market-based increase! 'Course, with the average Texas salary now about seven percent lower than the other large states, you might want to try this trick with Michigan – oops, bad example.

But in these troubled times, not just for our state, but for our nation as a whole, it becomes more important to focus on what is working. And, just as we have for 60 years, TACT is getting the work done. We may joke about Michigan now, but Closing the Gaps is succeeding. Let's continue to use stimulus money, TEXAS Grant increases, larger appropriations, and endowment returns to keep the required quantity and quality of faculty needed to serve these expanding enrollments. The University of Texas System regents have also approved nearly three-quarters of a billion dollars to restore the UT Medical Branch in Galveston to its full, pre-Ike operating status. The best course of action during times of economic uncertainty is investing in the future, and that means more funds to higher education.

The legislature may be slow to start, but we're helping them catch up.

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The TACT Quarterly eBulletin

Texas Association of College Teachers
Defending Academic Freedom

CONTENTS

Cover Page

Index

**The President's
Column**

**The Executive
Director's Report**

Legislative Report

**Pictures from
the Capitol**

**Closing the Gaps in
Faculty Salaries**

GRF Contributors

**Membership
Application**

**Legislative
First Alerts**

Past eBulletins



Legislative Report

**by Cindy Simpson
TACT VP of Legislative Affairs**

TACT leaders recently completed our annual legislative visits in Austin to support issues of higher education and faculty welfare. While it is difficult during the Legislative Session (especially on Fridays early in the session) to see elected officials, we visited with staff members of more than a dozen education policy leaders, including committee chairs of Senate Finance and Higher Education and House Appropriations Subcommittee on Education, Higher Education, and Pensions and Investments. We also saw staff members of other traditional TACT supporters.

Before we even left the Capitol grounds, we were contacted by two offices requesting our support on issues soon to be heard in committee.

Discussion topics included: faculty compensation, increased TEXAS Grant funding, our opposition to last session's Academic Bill of Rights, and the need to fund any new campus requirements resulting from College Readiness Standards. We also talked about investing funds from federal stimulus initiative to expand the infrastructure necessitated by the successful enrollment growth as part of Closing the Gaps.

As several of us returned to the office from the Capitol, the car was quiet. It was the first time in seven hours that we weren't in conversation, plotting talking points, walking (and walking and walking) between offices, or in hurry-up-and-wait mode. I want to thank my colleagues who took a day (or two) from their lives to travel to Austin and preach the TACT gospel. If Woody Allen is right: "Ninety percent of life is just showing up," these folks did more than just show up – they thoughtfully expressed what we all talk about on campus to the folks who can do something about it.

I heartily endorse your participation next time TACT invites you to Austin. It's only scary the first time; from then on you're on a mission.

And, finally, a plug for our James Puckett Government Relations Fund (GRF). For years, Jim not only attended these organized visits, he would make additional opportunities to travel to Austin from as far away as Kingsville to have his opinions heard. To honor his service, if you can't break away from your daily responsibilities, consider a contribution of \$75 or whatever to TACT GRF. It helps us pay for our indispensable staff who organize these visits and monitor the goings-on when we can't be there.

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The TACT Quarterly eBulletin

Texas Association of College Teachers
Defending Academic Freedom

CONTENTS

Cover Page

Index

The President's
Column

The Executive
Director's Report

Legislative Report

Pictures from
the Capitol

Closing the Gaps in
Faculty Salaries

GRF Contributors

Membership
Application

Legislative
First Alerts

Past eBulletins

Thank you for your support at the Capitol!



**In Senator Zaffrini's Office
From Left to Right:
Chuck Hempstead, Vincent Cho, Gary Coulton,
Joe Kemble, Cindy Simpson**



**From Left to Right:
Mark Gaus, Cindy Simpson, Peter Hugill, Gary Coulton,
Joe Kemble, Chuck Hempstead**

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The TACT Quarterly eBulletin

Texas Association of College Teachers
Defending Academic Freedom

CONTENTS

Cover Page

Index

The President's
Column

The Executive
Director's Report

Legislative Report

Pictures from
the Capitol

Closing the Gaps in
Faculty Salaries

GRF Contributors

Membership
Application

Legislative
First Alerts

Past eBulletins



Closing the Gaps in Faculty Salaries at Peer Institutions

by David Castle
TACT Executive Director

I noted in the eBulletin last year that the Texas Closing the Gaps plan for higher education calls for reducing the disparity with other states in participation, success, excellence, and research. To that end the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board has established a Higher Education Accountability System to measure progress in closing the gaps in these areas, and has assigned each Texas public university five out-of-state peer institutions. The Coordinating Board lists faculty salaries as a "contextual measure" of excellence. The designation of out-of-state peers permits an assessment of the extent to which salary gaps may exist between Texas public university faculty and those at peer institutions in other states.

The University of Texas System is comprised of the flagship institution at Austin and eight universities around the state. The Coordinating Board has determined that the out-of-state peers for these universities are:

The University of Texas at Austin: Ohio State University, University of California-Berkeley, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, University of Michigan-Ann Arbor, and University of Minnesota-Twin Cities.

The University of Texas at Arlington: University of New Mexico, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, Florida Atlantic University, San Diego State University, and University of Memphis.

The University of Texas at Dallas: University of New Mexico, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, SUNY at Albany, University of California-Riverside, and University of Maryland-Baltimore County.

The University of Texas at El Paso: University of New Mexico, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, Florida Atlantic University, San Diego State University, and University of Akron.

The University of Texas-Pan American: Arkansas State University, Central Missouri State University, California State University-Los Angeles, California State University-Northridge, and CUNY Lehman College.

The University of Texas at Brownsville: Florida Gulf Coast University, University of Colorado at Colorado Springs, Alabama A & M University, California State University-Dominguez Hills, and Chicago State University.

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The TACT Quarterly eBulletin

Texas Association of College Teachers
Defending Academic Freedom

CONTENTS

Cover Page

Index

The President's Column

The Executive Director's Report

Legislative Report

Pictures from the Capitol

Closing the Gaps in Faculty Salaries

GRF Contributors

Membership Application

Legislative First Alerts

Past eBulletins

Closing the Gaps in Faculty Salaries at Peer Institutions (cont'd.)

The University of Texas of the Permian Basin: Florida Gulf Coast University, University of Colorado at Colorado Springs, Arizona State University at West Campus, Colorado State University-Pueblo, and University of Illinois at Springfield.

The University of Texas at San Antonio: University of New Mexico, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, Eastern Michigan University, San Francisco State University, and University of North Carolina at Charlotte.

The University of Texas at Tyler: Florida Gulf Coast University, University of Colorado at Colorado Springs, The University of Tennessee-Chattanooga, The University of West Florida, and University of Southern Maine.

For comparison with out-of-state peers, I group the University of Texas institutions by their Coordinating Board designations as Research Universities and Emerging Universities, and Comprehensive and Master's Universities. Table 1 shows average professor salaries for 2007-08 according to data published by the National Center for Education Statistics, using the Integrated Post-Secondary Education Data System (IPEDS). The University of Texas at Austin is designated as a Research University, the other Texas schools as Emerging Research Universities.

Table 1
Average Full Professor Salaries at Research Universities and Emerging Research Universities in The University of Texas System Compared to Salaries at Out-of State Peer Institutions, 2007-08.

Texas University	Average Professor Salary	Average at Peer Institutions
UT at Austin	\$126,018	\$122,986
UT at Arlington	\$98,160	\$94,580
UT at Dallas	\$123,079	\$110,521
UT at El Paso	\$89,498	\$94,380
UT at San Antonio	\$106,990	\$94,837

Average salaries for full professors at these Texas institutions of higher education exceed those of their out-of-state peers in four of five instances; only UT at El Paso has lower average professor salaries less than their five designated peer institutions. Closing the gaps? What gaps?

The faculty salary gaps appear in Table 2, which compares average salaries at Comprehensive and Master's universities and those at peer institutions. The Coordinating Board classifies The University of Texas-Pan American as a Comprehensive University, and lists the others as Master's Universities.

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The TACT Quarterly eBulletin

Texas Association of College Teachers
Defending Academic Freedom

CONTENTS

Cover Page

Index

The President's
Column

The Executive
Director's Report

Legislative Report

Pictures from
the Capitol

Closing the Gaps in
Faculty Salaries

GRF Contributors

Membership
Application

Legislative
First Alerts

Past eBulletins

Closing the Gaps in Faculty Salaries at Peer Institutions (cont'd.)

Table 2

Average Full Professor Salaries at Comprehensive Universities and Master's Universities in The University of Texas System Compared to Salaries at Out-of-State Peer Institutions, 2007-08.

Texas University	Average Professor Salary	Average at Peer Institutions
UT-Pan American	\$82,254	\$92,007
UT at Brownsville	\$72,973	\$86,422
UT-Permian Basin	\$76,924	\$86,131
UT at Tyler	\$76,451	\$89,389

Thus, while all but one of the Emerging Research Universities in the UT System have average faculty salaries greater than those at out-of-state peer institutions, all the Comprehensive and Master's Universities in the system have drastically lower-than-average faculty salaries compared to peer institutions.

A Coordinating Board document titled Accountability in Higher Education: Promoting Excellence in Texas Public Universities Through Institutional Groupings, Peers, and Benchmarks states that both Comprehensive Universities and Master's Universities in Texas "... are expected to provide excellent preparation not only for the workforce, but prepare students for professional schools and graduate education." At some universities excellent teaching is supposed to matter, but it appears to matter much less than research in terms of external faculty salary equity.

An average of more than \$10,000 in average professor salaries separates Comprehensive and Master's institutions in the UT System from their out-of-state peer universities. Is the same true at other Comprehensive Universities and Master's Universities in Texas outside the UT System? Tables 3 and 4 compare these other Texas public universities to their peers designated by the Coordinating Board.

Table 3

Average Full Professor Salaries at Other Comprehensive Universities in Texas Compared to Salaries at Out-of-State Peer Institutions, 2007-08.

Texas University	Average Professor Salary	Average at Peer Institutions
Lamar	\$82,505	\$79,000
Prairie View A&M	\$80,528	\$84,115
Stephen F. Austin	\$75,461	\$79,440
Tarleton State	\$77,527	\$74,679
A&M-International	\$83,878	\$77,731
West Texas A&M	\$72,443	\$78,041

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The TACT Quarterly eBulletin

Texas Association of College Teachers

Defending Academic Freedom

CONTENTS

Cover Page

Index

The President's Column

The Executive Director's Report

Legislative Report

Pictures from the Capitol

Closing the Gaps in Faculty Salaries

GRF Contributors

Membership Application

Legislative First Alerts

Past eBulletins

Closing the Gaps in Faculty Salaries at Peer Institutions (cont'd.)

Three of the Texas universities show higher average professor salaries than their out-of-state peer institutions, and three have lower average salaries. For the three with lower average professor salaries, the average difference is less than \$5,000.

Table 4
Average Full Professor Salaries at Other Master's Universities in Texas Compared to Salaries at Out-of-State Peer Institutions, 2007-08.

Texas University	Average Professor Salary	Average at Peer Institutions
Angelo State	\$73,933	\$90,197
Midwestern State	\$75,493	\$79,301
Houston-Clear Lake	\$88,762	\$91,903
Houston-Downtown	\$81,994	\$90,197
Houston-Victoria	\$86,922	\$91,903
Sul Ross State	\$68,236	\$80,666
A&M-Galveston	\$93,302	\$88,310
A&M-Texarkana	\$81,928	\$70,500

Six of the eight other Texas Master's universities have average professor salaries lower than those of peer institutions. The average difference for these Texas institutions is just over \$8,000. Only Angelo State University and Sul Ross State University show the kind of huge discrepancy (approximately \$10,000 or more difference) that characterize full professor salaries at the Comprehensive or Master's institutions in the University of Texas System.

Is the faculty salary bias against "teaching schools" in the UT System evident in the Texas A&M System as well? The A&M System institutions in Tables 3 and 4 are: Prairie View A&M, Tarleton State, Texas A&M-International, West Texas A&M, Texas A&M-Galveston, and Texas A&M-Texarkana. Four of the six A&M System universities have higher average professor salaries than do their out-of-state peer institutions. Therefore, the Texas A&M System has managed rather well at maintaining external faculty salary equity at Comprehensive Universities and Master's Universities.

The glaring difference in the data is the discrepancy between the group of Research Universities and Emerging Research Universities in the UT System and the set of Comprehensive and Master's Universities. Full professors at The University of Texas and the four Emerging Research Universities in the system average \$108,749 compared to the \$103,461 average at out-of-state peer institutions. Full professors at the Comprehensive and Master's Universities in the UT System have average salaries of \$77,151 compared to an average of \$88,487 for professors at peer institutions.

Maintaining external faculty salary equity is apparently more important at some kinds of universities within the UT System than at others. Faculty at UT-Brownsville, UT-Pan American, UT-Permian Basin, and UT-Tyler deserve better treatment within the UT System in terms of external faculty salary equity.

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The TACT Quarterly eBulletin

Texas Association of College Teachers
Defending Academic Freedom

CONTENTS

Cover Page

Index

**The President's
Column**

**The Executive
Director's Report**

Legislative Report

**Pictures from
the Capitol**

**Closing the Gaps in
Faculty Salaries**

GRF Contributors

**Membership
Application**

**Legislative
First Alerts**

Past eBulletins

The James M. Puckett, Ph. D. Government Relations Fund

The TACT Dr. James M. Puckett, Ph.D. Government Relations Fund is a result of optional contributions made by those committed to TACT's heightened public affairs program. It is not used for candidate contributions, but is used for activities that will increase awareness of TACT among influences of public policy. Your contribution will assist in TACT's legislative efforts to improve Texas higher education. All expenditures are approved in advance by TACT's President, President-elect and Legislative Committee Chair.

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