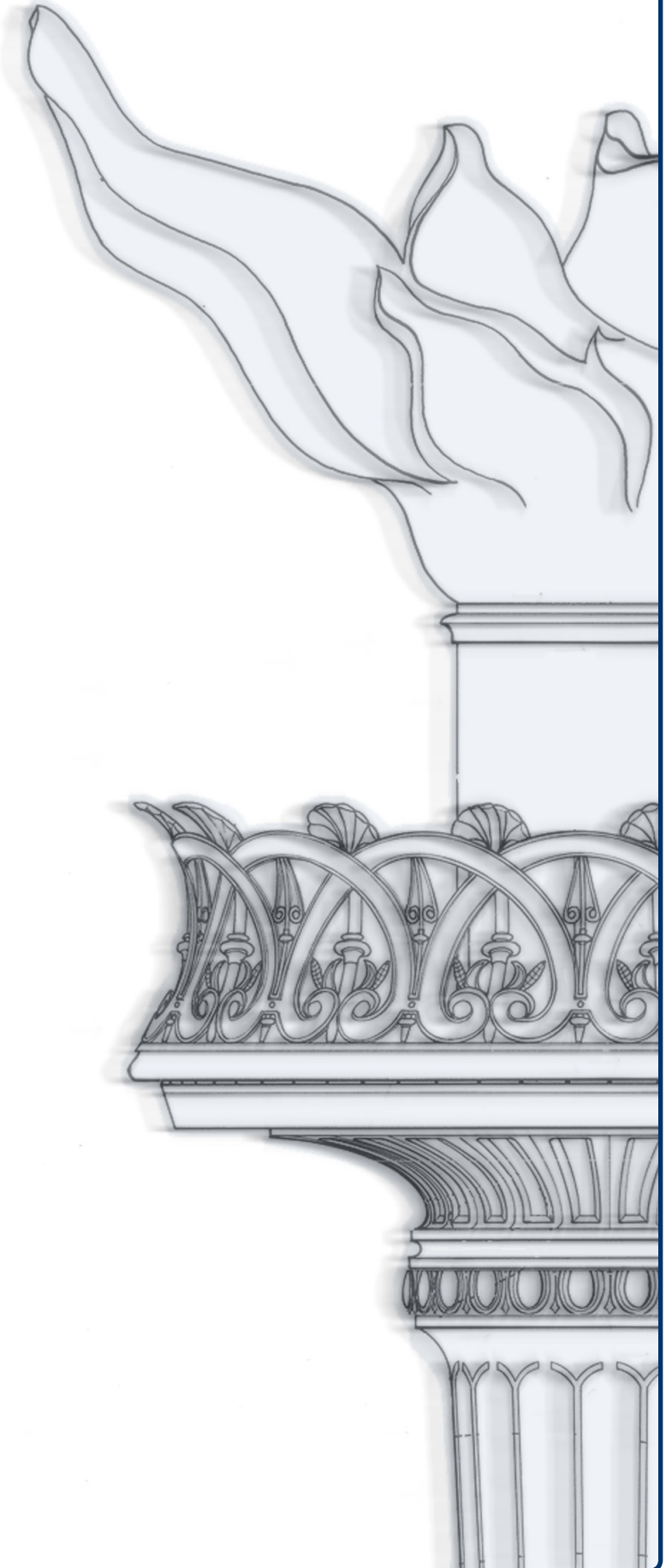


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Texas Association of College Teachers
Defending Academic Freedom



Quarterly eBulletin
OCT-DEC 2006

The TACT Quarterly eBulletin

Oct/Nov/Dec 2006 LX No. 2

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President's Column

by Dr. Elizabeth Lewandowski
TACT President

The Election is Over

The election is over and, for better or worse, our newly re-organized government will begin getting down to work soon. Before we know it the 80th Texas Legislature will begin meeting, discussing and passing bills. Bills that may or may not benefit higher education. In the last two sessions, we have seen a great deal of attention paid to public education. All indicators are that this will be the session when the legislature turns its eyes (and hopefully, its pocket books) to higher education.

Those of us in higher education know that our needs are as great as those in any other area of education. Those of us in higher education know that with the budget cuts of the last legislature we are further behind being able to responsibly run our universities than we were four years ago. Those of us in higher education know that without appropriate state funding the real cost of higher education must continue to be borne by the ones least able to fund the cost, the students. Those of us in higher education believe in the importance of a full college education, not one limited in number of hours by individuals outside higher education.

What then can we do to make a difference? We are all overworked, many of us are underpaid and most of us are stretched to our limits in terms of available hours in the day. The Capitol and its workings seem as though they are on another world for all the daily impact most of us feel we have. I am writing to you from my office at 6:00 in the morning on a weekend because that is when I have the time to do so. I don't believe that I am so unusual in the time I spend on campus and/or working.

How can we make a difference? How can I positively affect the future of higher education in Texas, and thereby my own future? Three ways come immediately to mind.

First, we can carefully read each of the TACT First Alerts that will arrive in the coming months. Each Alert tells the membership about bills that are being considered, committees that are meeting and important discussions held with legislators. Each Alert offers an opportunity to place a phone call or write a quick email to a legislator to voice your opinion on the direction of the legislature regarding higher education. So read and write!

Second, we can make a financial donation to the James M. Puckett Government Relations Fund. Named for a recent president of TACT who was fully involved in working with the legislature for a better future for higher education, this

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President's Column

by Dr. Elizabeth Lewandowski
TACT President

The Election is Over

(continued from previous page)

fund finances much of TACT's lobbying work in Austin. I recently chose to forego a purchase of something not really necessary so that I could make a more substantial donation. What about brown bagging lunch for one week so that you can make a \$25 or even \$50 donation? What a small sacrifice to have an impact on the future of higher education in Texas!

Third, join me and others in Austin on February 15 for our Legislative Day when we take a day to visit with members of the legislature. We have appointments to visit with committee chairs and members of the House and Senate, people making the decisions vital to the health of higher education. Recently, a number of us visited the Capitol and met with a variety of aides. Our agenda was presented, we were received well and our voices were heard.

In theatre, we teach that deed is truth. While we may say one thing and mean another, our actions speak the truth. I tell my students (and friends!) that if they don't vote, they don't get to complain about what the government does. By extension, if we don't work to make a difference, if we idly sit by and do not let our legislators know what our needs are, if we fail to speak up, we don't have the right to complain about low salaries, low retirement benefits, low university budgets, increase in oversight by government officials or anything else!

If this is higher education's year in the legislature and we fail to make our voices heard, we deserve exactly what we get!

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Executive Director's Report

by Chuck Hempstead
TACT Executive Director

Elections Done - Full Steam Ahead

As President Elizabeth writes in this issue, elections are history and the jockeying has begun for the next legislative session.

I still remember the strange feeling several years ago when the Senate Finance Committee began budget reviews before legislators were sworn in and committee members were appointed. Now they begin before Election Day, and I have been downtown plenty listening to university administrators uniformly ask for the ten percent of their budget that they were ordered to cut from their appropriations requests.

And TACT begins its advocacy earlier each cycle. Bill prefilings began this week, so we will soon begin reviewing the thousands of measures that will be proposed through March.

Last month, during our Fall Conference, a TACT delegation pounded the pavement meeting with legislators and aides to press for our agenda. Our five ambitious issues are listed elsewhere in this issue, and many are perennial; TACT continues to believe that faculty salaries, working conditions and shared governance issues, along with higher education funding, are vital elements of our State's future.

At risk of sounding like a broken record, here's something you can do to help me help you. Call or email this office for the list of TACT members on your campus. Invite them and your other colleagues to coffee with your State representatives and senator during December (O.K., call it one more holiday party). Tell them that you care about the next generation of our leaders and that is why you are in this profession. Ask them to be your partner when they come to Austin. They could leave no greater legacy.

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

TACT would like to thank the following 2007-2008 GRF contributors:

National Evaluation Systems

Joe Kemble

Elizabeth Lewandowski

Dr. W. Allen Martin

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Chuck Hempstead

Cindy Simpson

Debra Price

J. Higham

Alice Ketchand

A. Jerry Bruce

If you would like to donate to the Dr. James M. Puckett, Ph D. Government Relations Fund (GRF), please mail your contribution to the TACT State Office at 5750 Balcones Drive, Suite 201, Austin, TX 78731.

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 influencers of public policy. Your contribution of \$29, \$59 or \$99 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.

TACT 2007 Legislative Agenda

TACT supports the following priorities:

1. Repeal last session's legislation regarding the 120 semester credit hour limitation on degree plans.
2. Adopt a phased-in plan for increasing faculty salaries, beginning by narrowing the gap between Texas higher education salaries and the median of the top ten most populous states by 25%.
3. Support increasing the ORP employer contribution from 6% to 8.5% and establishing quality criteria for approved products and companies.
4. Support an actuarially sound TRS, including an increase in the state's contribution to the Retirement Trust.
5. Include a faculty member on university system boards of regents.

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Guest Editorial

by Dave Castle, Ph.D.

Changes in Faculty Salaries at Texas Public Universities

The last five years have seen an increase in Texas state funds for higher-education operating expenses from \$4.03 billion to \$5.24 billion as well as an average tuition and fees increase for public four-year institutions from \$2,698 to \$4,423, according to data published in *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. In terms of percentage changes from FY 2001 to FY 2006, Texas ranked sixth among the 50 states in change in appropriations for higher-education operating expenses, and 10th in the nation for average tuition and fees increase. Have these changes been reflected in faculty salary increases?

Comparing average public university full professor salaries in FY 2001 to FY 2006, Texas has moved from 20th among the 50 states to 15th. That's the good news. The bad news is that too many Texas public universities have seen too little increase in faculty salaries. Several universities that exhibited comparatively low average salaries five years ago show low salaries today, revealing a pattern that is likely to continue unless faculty salary problems at these universities are addressed and corrected. Table 1 shows the rank and mean full professor salary in FY 2006 compared to FY 2001 for 34 Texas public universities.

See Table 1 on page 8.

Seven of the bottom ten universities in FY 2001 are still among the bottom ten in FY 2006: Texas A&M-Corpus Christi, Texas A&M-Kingsville, Tarleton State, West Texas A&M, University of Texas-Brownsville, Stephen F. Austin State, and Sul Ross State. Two others at or near the bottom five years ago have showed dramatic improvement, however. Prairie View A&M has moved from dead last, 34th among 34 public universities, to 19th. And Lamar University has seen full professor salaries rise from 30th position in FY 2001 to 15th by FY 2006. Both universities benefited from changes in administration, with new presidents much more committed to increasing faculty salaries than previous presidents had been.

Long-serving university presidents at Sul Ross State, Tarleton State, and UT-Brownsville have failed to increase faculty salaries substantially during the last 15 years. Hopefully, new presidents at Texas A&M-Corpus Christi (since 2005), West Texas A&M (2006), and Stephen F. Austin State (presidential search ongoing) will work to greatly improve faculty salaries at these traditionally low-pay universities. Changes in administration may not, of course, lead to changes in faculty salaries—witness the last two “new” presidents at Stephen F. Austin State and Texas A&M-Kingsville.



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Guest Editorial

by Dave Castle, Ph.D.

Changes in Faculty Salaries at Texas Public Universities

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Table 1. Full Professor Salaries at Texas Public Universities, FY 2006 and FY 2001.

FY 2006 Rank	Public University	FY 2006 Mean	FY 2001 Mean	FY 2001 Rank
1	University of Texas	\$115,302	\$94,286	1
2	University of Texas at Dallas	\$109,013	\$86,456	3
3	University of Houston	\$105,941	\$89,147	2
4	Texas A&M University	\$105,863	\$84,910	4
5	University of Texas at San Antonio	\$101,126	\$72,701	9
6	Texas Tech University	\$93,911	\$82,491	5
7	Texas A&M University-Galveston	\$89,950	\$69,079	12
8	University of Texas at Arlington	\$88,835	\$75,217	6
9	University of North Texas	\$85,417	\$74,027	7
10	Texas Southern University	\$84,863	\$63,133	19
11	University of Texas at El Paso	\$84,310	\$67,855	13
12	University of Houston-Clear Lake	\$84,115	\$73,711	8
13	Texas A&M University-International	\$82,360	\$72,248	10
14	University of Houston-Victoria	\$80,248	\$64,819	17
15	Lamar University	\$78,869	\$58,096	30
16	Texas State University-San Marcos	\$78,546	\$65,425	16
17	University of Texas-Pan American	\$77,566	\$66,451	14
18	University of Houston-Downtown	\$77,343	\$60,799	25
19	Prairie View A&M University	\$77,195	\$56,125	34
20	Texas Woman's University	\$76,957	\$61,481	24
21	Sam Houston State University	\$76,481	\$64,677	18
22	University of Texas at Tyler	\$76,200	\$62,891	20
23	Midwestern State University	\$75,636	\$69,760	11
24	University of Texas of the Permian Basin	\$74,298	\$65,532	15
25	Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi	\$74,214	\$60,211	27
26	Texas A&M University-Texarkana	\$74,142	\$61,564	22
27	Tarleton State University	\$73,198	\$58,872	29
28	Texas A&M University-Commerce	\$72,417	\$62,394	21
29	Angelo State University	\$70,410	\$61,481	23
30	West Texas A&M University	\$70,187	\$57,649	31
31	University of Texas at Brownsville	\$69,594	\$56,812	33
32	Texas A&M University-Kingsville	\$68,532	\$57,324	32
33	Stephen F. Austin State University	\$68,190	\$59,666	28
34	Sul Ross State University	\$64,509	\$60,239	26

Source: Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board.

Faculty salary problems at Texas public universities will not be addressed unless faculty members raise the issues of salary equity and salary compression. The combined and coordinated efforts of local TACT chapters and faculty senates, along with TACT lobbying efforts in the Texas Legislature, are crucial to the continuing battle for higher faculty salaries at Texas public universities.

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Lone Star Legislative Summit Honors

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Larry J. King and Debbie Baisden were presented with "Texas Forever" prints created by artist Harold Coats. The presentations were gestures of appreciation from State Rep. Roy Blake, Jr.'s office for King and Baisden's participation in the Lone Star Legislative Summit. The summit was a two-day meeting held in August that brought representatives from national and state government to East Texas. King served as the moderator of a panel focused on higher education issues in Texas. Baisden and State Rep. Jim McReynolds served as panelists.



Pictured from left to right Larry King, Bruce Partain, President/CEO Nacogdoches County Chamber of Commerce, Debbie Baisden, Stephen F. Austin State University Vice President of Finance and Administration.

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