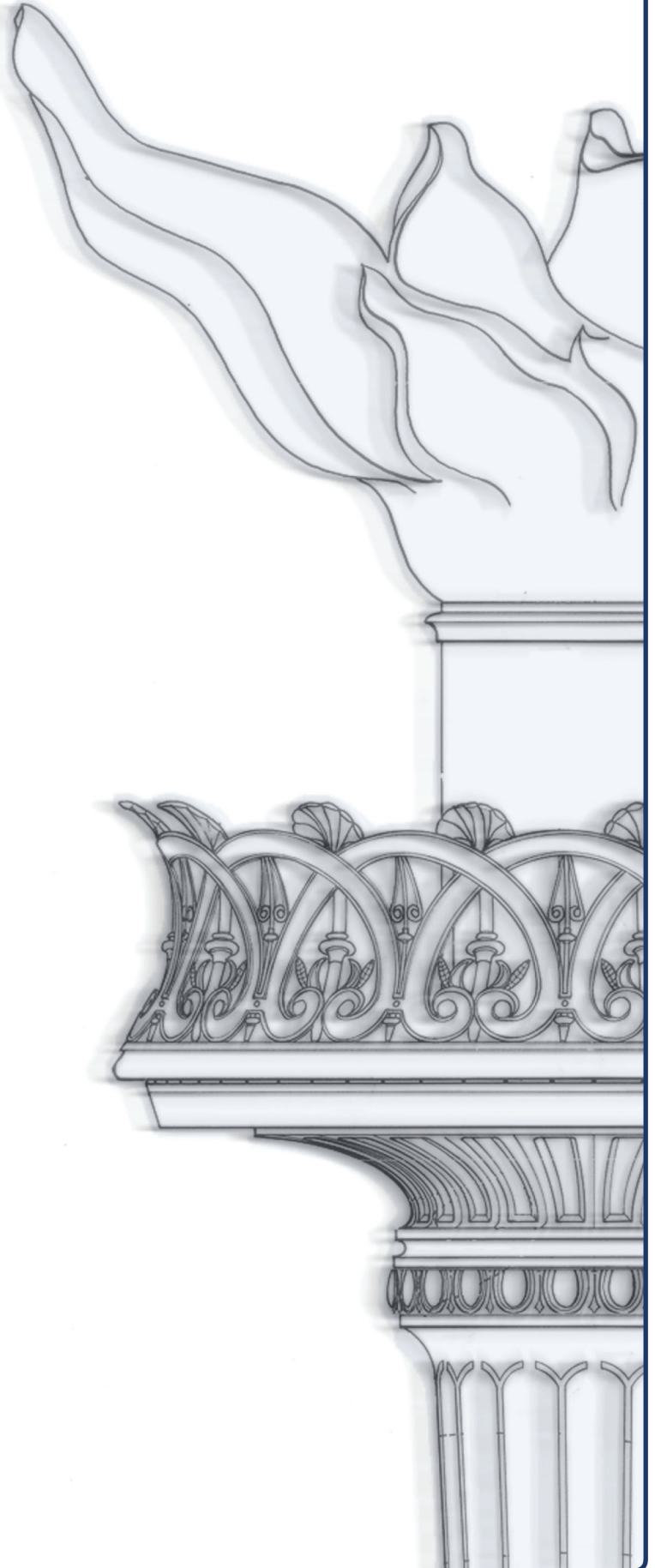


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Texas Association of College Teachers
Defending Academic Freedom
Volume LXX Number 4

Quarterly eBulletin

April/May/June 2017



The TACT Quarterly eBulletin

April/May/June 2017 - Volume LXX Number 4

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President's Message

by Donna Cox

Sam Houston State University

voice for those who currently feel they have no voice.

The essence of the university is discourse. For centuries, the academy has fostered the practice of freedom of speech for faculty, staff and students. Opportunities to share differing views in a civil manner help build campus community relationships where all are valued and respected. When public discourse takes a less than respectful turn, the community seems to falter. After reading TACT regular legislative updates during the current session, the ground seems a bit unsteady in higher education. How can we be invited into the conversations that most affect us and the students we serve?

I am proud to have been a member of TACT for the last six years. In that time, I have felt more empowered to exercise my own freedom of speech by having meaningful dialogues that we in academia so treasure. As incoming president, I am looking forward to serving you in any capacity I can and I am willing to be a voice for those who feel there is no place at the table for them. Please join me in inviting others to become active in TACT. Difficult conversations may be uncomfortable to have but through TACT, healthier relationships between academia and the legislature can be fostered. 🗺️

Through our membership in TACT, we can exercise our freedom of speech by calling, writing and visiting members of the Legislature who may or may not fully understand the consequences of their policy actions. Being involved in TACT not only benefits us as members, but provides faculty the opportunity to represent and be the

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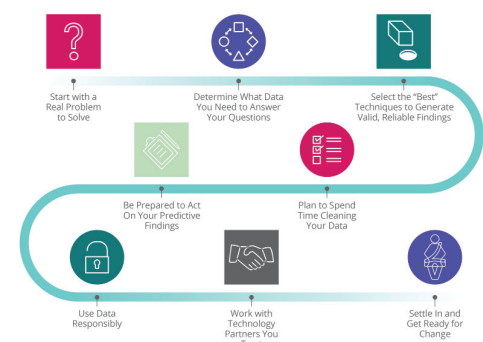
by Chuck Hempstead
TACT Executive Director

One of the best parts of attending meetings of the Higher Ed Coordinating Board is absorbing award-winning and cutting-edge initiatives among universities. Next trend: Predictive Analytics. Think what "Moneyball" did for baseball – gathering mega data to improve individual decisions.

Theoretically, by slicing and dicing the collected data, limited resources can focus on the individual needs of the individual student. Barriers to success may be addressed. Realistic expectations may be communicated. A poor kid from a marginal school in the barrio can still be a doctor, but she needs to know that it's an uphill climb, and the educational, financial, social and other hindrances must be overcome.

Amarillo College is an example of using data to identify barriers and increasing their success in student completion. They know that their average student is a poor female, 27 years old, has children and works two part-time jobs. The College's strategic plan is called [No Excuses 2020](#). Their student survey found that among the top ten most important student needs, none were academic. Students were hungry, so they initiated a food pantry. They were under clothed, so a clothing closet was created to accept donations. Transportation was undependable, so contributions were accepted for car repairs. And stigma was removed by placing the help center in the middle of campus, because everyone needs help. The college is on its way toward its goal of attaining seventy percent student completion by the year 2020. Barriers are identified, then overcome. 

How to Use Predictive Analytics for Student Success



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Handouts from the presentation
may be viewed at:

<http://www.theccb.state.tx.us/index.cfm?objectid=43D2196F-E273-9045-537ECA14B44FFAFE>



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To Report or Not Report? A Very Important Question!

**by Gaines West, Attorney-at-Law
West, Webb, Allbritton & Gentry**

All must have heard by now about SB 576. Some say the bill was well intentioned to address the college {so-called} sexual assault epidemic. Without a doubt recent statistics tend to indicate an unparalleled problem now exists all around you on your college campus. But what do YOU do about it? Well, our lawmakers are now debating whether you should be criminally responsible if you fail to report incidents of "sexual or interpersonal violence" {I wonder what definition our legislature might attach to these words?}. Lots is being written about problems like this on our college campuses, but only recently have YOU been put on the spot as being potentially criminally responsible if you don't blow the whistle on improper conduct {again, I must wonder who it is who will define just what that may be?}

Here are a few lessons you can learn from what you may have heard or read about this topic:

This "conversation" concerns you and how you do your job – don't expect someone else to protect you – get involved and state your opinions. Call or write the member of the House or Senate in Texas who represent you and tell them and TACT what you think about all of this.

Don't pretend that improper conduct isn't happening around you – because most likely it is. Be involved, be an advocate for anyone who is victimized and vow to make your campus a safe place for everyone!

Get behind sensible requirements that won't criminalize your conduct for doing your best to help in an already bad situation. We already have laws that can and will protect victims of abuse - so work on your campus to best implement the protections that already exist.

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To Report or Not Report? A Very Important Question! (continued)



Support active discussions within your administration about using current laws to address abuse - for it is truly when we ignore the obvious that new restrictions can be implemented that effectively overreach and miss being able to meet any of our intended goals {no matter how well intentioned they are}.

More laws, more regulations and nuanced criminal exposure to mandate your conduct is, in this lawyer's estimation, a poor way to deal with real, {or perceived} problems {in this or any area}.

Stay tuned – and watch for the outcome of this legislation this Ses-

sion. Some say if it passes at all it will be a “watered down” version. Some say our Governor would never sign into law such criminalization of your conduct. One thing we know for sure is – the legislature is now in the month that they {hopefully} will go home. Be vigilant and follow this issue through to the end. To report or not – that IS the question! 🗺️

“The information in this column is intended to provide a general understanding of the law, not as legal advice. Readers with legal problems, including those whose questions may be addressed here, should consult attorneys for advice on their particular circumstances.”

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TACT Past President Named as Houston's 50 Most Influential Women by Houston Woman Magazine

HBU's Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs, Dr. Cynthia Simpson was named as one of "Houston's 50 Most Influential Women of 2016" by Houston Woman Magazine.




According to Beverly Denver, publisher of Houston Woman Magazine, the honorees are "knowledgeable, credible and trustworthy." Ms. Denver added, "Those selected as Houston's 50 Most Influential Women of 2016 are individuals with vast networks of social and professional connections. They have earned an enviable reputation for their expertise in a particular field or arena."

Simpson was honored along with

public relations directors, business women owners, academic leadership, executives and non-profit community influencers. "It is an honor to be selected along with 49 other women leaders in Houston. Our city continues to be a place of great opportunity for women to strive and succeed. As a mother, it is encouraging to see so many great role models for my daughter and to see all the ways that women make a difference in their pursuit of excellence," stated Simpson.

Simpson has over twenty years of experience in the public and private sectors as an educator, advocate, educational diagnostician, administrator and chief executive officer. She maintains an active role in the education industry and serves as an educational consultant in the areas of assessment and program evaluation.

View the complete list of "[Houston's 50 Most Influential Women of 2016](#)" 

Source: hbu.edu - March 2, 2017



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TACT Legislative Issues: 2016-2017

1. Higher Education Funding. The top concern among our recent faculty issues survey, TACT supports reinstating appropriations investments, primarily in the following areas:

A. Fully fund the anticipated cost to universities of the Hazlewood Act Legacy Program.

B. Increase current funding levels of the TEXAS Grant scholarship program to account for previous cuts, increased tuition, growing enrollments and a higher percentage of students requiring financial aid.

C. Maintain the "local control" of regents setting tuition rates.

D. Provide sufficient resources and legislative intent that universities must address the salary compression and inversion issues created by hiring new faculty at higher salaries than existing faculty.

2. Public Education Funding. Provide sufficient funding to public education to replace "Robin Hood" and assure preparedness for higher education, including monitoring the quality of dual credit coursework.

3. 60x30TX. TACT will endorse the goals and proposed strategies of 60x30TX in order to provide the education needed by the workforce of the 21st Century. Along with goal support, TACT will support sufficient funding to K-12 so college enrollees are sufficiently prepared.

4. Handguns on campuses. TACT still opposes allowing individuals to carry concealed handguns on college campuses and encourages educational programming to minimize the resulting increase in gun accidents and incidents resulting from increased access.

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

For over 70 years, TACT has been on the front lines of higher education issues in Texas. The GRF assists TACT with a key component of our mission, **communicating TACT's legislative agenda** in order to improve Texas higher education.

Your voluntary contribution to the GRF allows TACT to present its members' agenda to key lawmakers and legislative committees. The GRF is never used for candidate contributions, only for activities that increase awareness of issues concerning faculty statewide. All expenditures are approved in advance by TACT's President, President-Elect and Legislative Committee Chair.

[Click Here](#) to Contribute

Thank you to the 2016-2017 contributors

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TACT Membership and EPLI

In the current climate of uncertainty in Texas' system of higher education, it's important to have strong advocates. Since 1948, the Texas Association of College Teachers has served university professors in the areas of academic freedom, statistical research, tenure implementation and protection, professional standards, and working conditions. We invite you to take a key career step by [becoming a member of TACT today](#) for \$158 (which includes professional liability insurance).

Your membership in TACT lets your voice be heard beyond your classroom and campus. We vigilantly monitor all agencies that affect faculty members to ensure your interests are represented. Our First Alert emails and quarterly eBulletins provide you with current developments on educational public policy issues, and we are always soliciting articles from you, our members. We also maintain a regular presence at the Capitol, where we lobby policymakers on your top concerns.

All TACT memberships include Educators Professional Liability Insurance (EPLI). EPLI provides up to \$2 million in coverage, plus legal fees for damages. EPLI is an important benefit for our members that has proven invaluable over the years.

Sign up or renew your TACT membership today!

Visit "[Join TACT](#)"

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