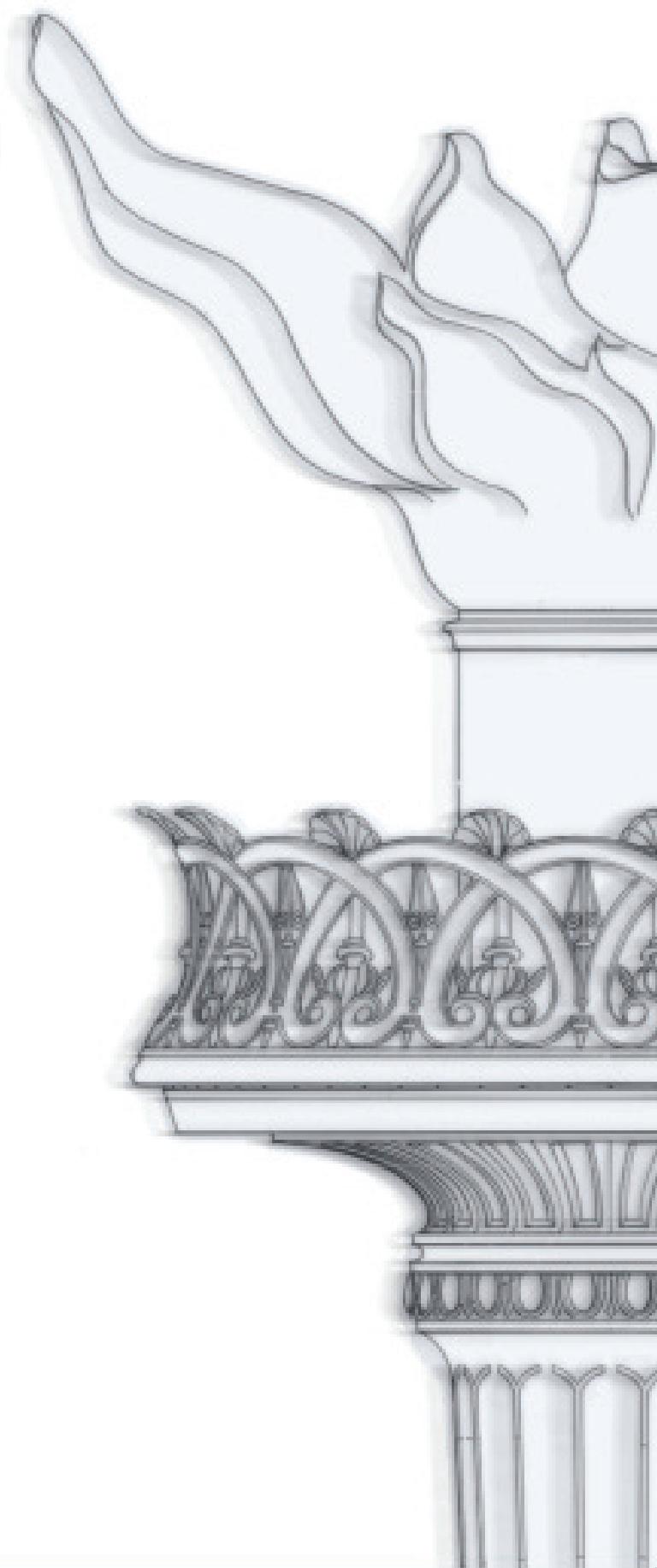


tact

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



Quarterly eBulletin

January/February/March 2018

The TACT Quarterly eBulletin

January/February/March 2018 - Volume LXXI Number 3

In this quarter's TACT newsletter...

- Page 3 Faculty Awaken to Higher Ed Challenges
by Chuck Hempstead
- Page 5 #MeToo
by Gaines West
- Page 8 TACT Legislative Issues
- Page 9 Government Relations Fund
- Page 10 Membership

TACT Board of Directors 2017-2018

President

Donna Cox
Sam Houston State University

Past-President

Mary Jo Garcia-Biggs
Texas State University

VP of Financial Affairs

James Klein
Del Mar College

VP of Membership

Stacey Bumstead
Lamar University Houston

VP of Legislative Affairs

Jonathan Coopersmith
Texas A&M University

Directors At Large

Matthew Capps
Midwestern State University

Gary Coulton
University of Texas -
San Antonio

Leann Curry
Midwestern State University

Lisa Hobson
Prairie View A&M University

Peter Hugill
Texas A&M University

Executive Director

Chuck Hempstead
(512) 419-9275

Office Administrator

Abby Campana

Publishing Editor

Derek Buczynski



Texas Association of College Teachers
5750 Balcones Dr., Suite 201 Austin, Texas 78731
office@tact.org
(512) 419-9275



The TACT Quarterly eBulletin

Texas Association of College Teachers
Defending Academic Freedom

CONTENTS

Cover Page

Index

Faculty Awaken to
Higher Ed Challenges

#MeToo

TACT Legislative
Issues

Government
Relations Fund

Membership



Faculty Awaken to Higher Ed Challenges

by Chuck Hempstead
TACT Executive Director

Just as members of the public are becoming more active relative to other issues, Texas faculty stepped up to participate in greater numbers during the recent TACT Spring Conference.

A larger-than-usual group attended the semi-annual Legislative Day, visiting with staff members of committees on higher education, state affairs, appropriations and more. Issues included higher education funding, the cost of the Hazelwood Act Legacy Program, TEXAS Grant scholarships and the goals of the 60X30 TX strategic plan. Additionally, we discussed the state's investigation of freedom of expression – and the safety con-



The TACT State Office? I think not

cerns – on campus. Finally, we encouraged additional funding for public education in order to better prepare young people for college and continued to encourage quality assurance among dual credit programs.

That afternoon, an excellent panel discussion reviewed the last legislative session and predicted what the next one will include. Panelists included Evan Smith, Founder and CEO of the Texas Tribune, Representative Donna Howard, who serves on the House Higher Education Committee, and Higher Ed Commissioner Raymund Paredes. Commissioner Paredes warned that during these times of many demands on state resources, higher education should slow the growth of new programs (includ-



A very casual Board of Directors

Contact us!

5750 Balcones Dr.,
Suite 201
Austin, TX 78731
office@tact.org
(512) 419-9275



The TACT Quarterly eBulletin

Texas Association of College Teachers
Defending Academic Freedom

CONTENTS

Cover Page

Index

Faculty Awaken to Higher Ed Challenges

#MeToo

TACT Legislative Issues

Government Relations Fund

Membership

Faculty Awaken to Higher Ed Challenges (continued)

ing medical schools and doctoral programs) which dilute the appropriations made to higher ed. Rep. Howard observed, “If you don’t increase the size of the pie but keep cutting it, the slices get thinner.”



Smith, Howard, Paredes and Woosley

Obviously knowing their audience, each panelist commented upon the Legislature permitting guns on campus despite nearly all knowledgeable parties advising them against it.

The panelists discussed the Joint Interim Committee on Higher Education Funding, which among other things will consider the \$1.1 Billion appropriation for Special Item Funding, which at one point during the past session had been eliminated until further negotiations replaced most of that money. TACT’s position is that Centers for Excellence is exactly what the

state needs from its higher education. Even A&M Chancellor John Sharp last session commented, “The sky is really going to fall if you pass this bill.”

Even the TACT Board Meeting was well attended, including a number of interested TACT members who do not sit on the Board. Discussions included approving a Nominating Committee Report, how TACT may become more involved in fall political elections and soliciting more member input before amending the Legislative Agenda for the Fall Legislative visits October 26.



Jim Woosley with Evan Smith

TACT is vibrant and powered by people who work hard to improve the professional lives of their colleagues. 🗺️

Contact us!

5750 Balcones Dr.,
Suite 201
Austin, TX 78731
office@tact.org
(512) 419-9275



The TACT Quarterly eBulletin

Texas Association of College Teachers
Defending Academic Freedom

CONTENTS

Cover Page

Index

Faculty Awaken to
Higher Ed Challenges

#MeToo

TACT Legislative
Issues

Government
Relations Fund

Membership



#MeToo

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

If you have been on the moon you probably aren't up to date on the "Weinstein" era of purging harassers. To some it is long overdue, and to others it is an appropriate reminder that - what did my Sunday School teachers say when I was growing up? - "Your sins will find you out!" And yet to some the scary prospect is that if your "enemies" can line up 2 or more to swear that you did something to someone {even 30 years ago} you should be severely punished NOW! And even scarier it seems to be happening - faculty terminations are on a decided uptick because of reports of inappropriate communications between colleagues and between professor and student.



NEWS FLASH: The college campus is NOT insulated from these

real and rapidly developing issues. We all know about student on student Title IX issues and the truncated process {or complete lack of it} that was reportedly weighted too heavily on the side of the accuser {DeVoss lifted the more draconian aspects of the Dear Colleague letter late last year} - but what do we know about the "she said" or "he said" claims against Professor X and how colleges are NOW reacting to such claims? The truth is the handling of these allegations is rapidly changing across academia. In my practice I have seen an alarming increase of firings of faculty who get a complaint or complaints involving claims of sexual misconduct {or just inappropriate behavior}. The college reasons they cannot take the risk of keeping an {even only accused} "abuser" on campus and the expense to fight a termination decision insulates most colleges from being anything

reacting to such claims? The truth is the handling of these allegations is rapidly changing across academia. In my practice I have seen an alarming increase of firings of faculty who get a complaint or complaints involving claims of sexual misconduct {or just inappropriate behavior}. The college reasons they cannot take the risk of keeping an {even only accused} "abuser" on campus and the expense to fight a termination decision insulates most colleges from being anything

Contact us!

5750 Balcones Dr.,
Suite 201
Austin, TX 78731
office@tact.org
(512) 419-9275



The TACT Quarterly eBulletin

Texas Association of College Teachers
Defending Academic Freedom

CONTENTS

Cover Page

Index

**Faculty Awaken to
Higher Ed Challenges**

#MeToo

**TACT Legislative
Issues**

**Government
Relations Fund**

Membership

#MeToo (continued)

other than fairly loose in their application of who must go when the rumors start flying.

So, what to do, what to do? Unfortunately there is no perfect solution. If you have REAL enemies - they may just be creative {and dedicated} enough to orchestrate a successful smear campaign against you. BUT, do follow the suggestions I have made before in this column - and be committed to your practices. Some practices to consider are:

- Clean up your communications with colleagues and don't talk, text or email students about personal matters;
- Involve others in your meetings - don't meet one on one in an enclosed area with a student or colleague of the opposite sex at any time {and be cognizant of same sex issues too};
- The Pence rule {don't dine alone with the opposite sex} may be a bit

over the top - but you may wish you had adopted this practice - AFTER being on the other end of a complaint;

- DO NOT CONCLUDE it can't happen to you! {one client recently said she was just too old for someone to make such claims - I quickly shared the facts of a case involving an 80 year old professor and 20 something student};

- Be aware that international students {and colleagues} come sometimes from very different cultures. What to you may be a joke - to them may be an insult - and possibly more.

BE AWARE

Contact us!

5750 Balcones Dr.,
Suite 201
Austin, TX 78731
office@tact.org
(512) 419-9275



The TACT Quarterly eBulletin

Texas Association of College Teachers
Defending Academic Freedom

CONTENTS

Cover Page

Index

Faculty Awaken to
Higher Ed Challenges

#MeToo

TACT Legislative
Issues

Government
Relations Fund

Membership

#MeToo (continued)

"...be practical, be careful, but also be on guard."

The bottom line to all of this is - be practical, be careful, but also be on guard. Speak clearly; call, text or email about business and nothing more in your employment setting with colleagues and students. Don't involve yourselves in their personal lives unless invited, and even then be VERY cautious. I am not asking you to be someone you are not - but I want to remind you that discretion, listening to that inner voice when you know you may be doing something you shouldn't be doing, is worth listening to and acting on - doing so {day in and day out} may just keep you employed and employable! 🇺🇸

"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."

Contact us!

5750 Balcones Dr.,
Suite 201
Austin, TX 78731
office@tact.org
(512) 419-9275





The TACT Quarterly eBulletin

Texas Association of College Teachers
Defending Academic Freedom

CONTENTS

Cover Page

Index

Faculty Awaken to
Higher Ed Challenges

#MeToo

TACT Legislative
Issues

Government
Relations Fund

Membership

TACT Legislative Issues: 2018

1. Higher Education Funding. TACT supports increasing appropriations investments over the current budget levels to fund faculty salary parity, Hurricane Harvey rebuilding, the growing unfunded mandate of the Hazelwood Act Legacy Program, TEXAS Grant scholarships to an increasingly poor student enrollment and continuing progress of the 60X30 TX goals of a better educated populace.

2. Public Education Funding. TACT supports increasing appropriations investments in public education to increase the number of college-ready freshmen prepared to prosper in higher education.

3. Freedom of Expression. Universities are increasingly the sites of demonstrations and counterdemonstrations regarding the important societal issues of the day. Higher education must be proactive in encouraging safe opinion-sharing among all its constituents.

Contact us!

5750 Balcones Dr.,
Suite 201
Austin, TX 78731
office@tact.org
(512) 419-9275

For more information contact Chuck Hempstead at 512-419-9275



The TACT Quarterly eBulletin

Texas Association of College Teachers
Defending Academic Freedom

CONTENTS

Cover Page

Index

Faculty Awaken to
Higher Ed Challenges

#MeToo

TACT Legislative
Issues

Government
Relations Fund

Membership

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 2017-2018 contributors

Contact us!

5750 Balcones Dr.,
Suite 201
Austin, TX 78731
office@tact.org
(512) 419-9275

Jonathan Coopersmith

Gary Coulton

Donna Cox

Chuck Hempstead

Peter Hugill

Harvey Johnson



The TACT Quarterly eBulletin

Texas Association of College Teachers
Defending Academic Freedom

CONTENTS

Cover Page

Index

**Faculty Awaken to
Higher Ed Challenges**

#MeToo

**TACT Legislative
Issues**

**Government
Relations Fund**

Membership

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](#)"

or renew over the phone by calling (512) 419-9275

Contact us!

5750 Balcones Dr.,
Suite 201
Austin, TX 78731
office@tact.org
(512) 419-9275



Visit www.tact.org and
join TACT Today!