

Report of the TAMS  
Commission on Advocacy & Governmental Affairs  
January 25, 2019

Robert Henry (TTU) SN, Chair 2019  
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**Commission on Advocacy and Governmental Affairs**

*The Commission on Advocacy and Governmental Affairs shall be primarily responsible for articulation with and review of issues relating to such entities as the Texas Music Educators Association, State Board Of Education, Texas Education Association, Coordinating Board, Field of Study Curriculum, Texas Legislature, and notification to membership of advocacy initiatives and the need for action-based responses. Commission shall present formal report to the Membership at each annual meeting.*

1. Commission members were recognized and service terms noted.
2. The 86th Texas Legislature session opened with some good news in that the amount for general-purpose spending during the 2020-2021 biennium has been increased, but, with the caveat that substantial supplemental appropriations could affect revenue available for the biennium. Much hinges on the very possible slowdown in economic factors.

Bills have been being filed for some time now and are about as expected falling into anticipated categories such as success-based funding, workforce development, dual credit enrollment, sexual assault/harassment, campus-carry, etc.

3. The THECB Legislative Recommendations include, among other items:
  - Restructure the core curriculum to help ensure students take courses that count toward their degrees. The more standardized the core is across institutions the easier it is to ensure the courses will apply to majors.
  - Create statewide specialized cores to narrow student choices to field of interest and get students on a general path to degree.
  - Consider reducing the number of hours in the core curriculum.
  - Require institutions of higher education to embed information about field of study courses in degree programs posted on their websites and verify use of the field of study curriculum.
  - Support an interactive online degree site that allows students to input their majors and receive a list of the required courses needed to complete a specific degree in four years.
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  - Require institutions to provide program course requirements to THECB, including indicators of which courses satisfy the core curriculum and field of study curriculum.
  - Study the feasibility of a transfer admissions guarantee and make recommendations to the Legislature about student and institutional criteria for such a system.

- Require high school students to demonstrate college readiness as prescribed by the Texas Success Initiative which includes pathways such as the SAT, ACT and the Texas Success Initiative Assessment (TSIA) in the disciplines they propose to take academic dual credit courses.
- Identify a means for public high school students to have the opportunity to take the TSIA, SAT or ACT free of charge at an appropriate point in their high school pathway. Any funding should be a “last dollar” effort intended to complement other free or subsidized testing opportunities.
- Expand the current requirement for students to file a degree plan at 30 semester credit hours to students enrolled in academic dual credit. Require institutions of higher education to document compliance.
- Continue to support and expand access to Early College High Schools with the structure and support mechanisms as currently structured by the Texas Education Agency.

4. Other THECB item for discussion:

**60X30TX**

**THE THIRD GOAL: MARKETABLE SKILLS**

By 2030, all graduates from Texas public institutions of higher education will have completed programs with identified marketable skills. This goal challenges institutions to think more explicitly about the programs they offer and the job skills that students learn within those programs. Marketable skills in this plan are defined as: *Those skills valued by employers that can be applied in a variety of work settings, including interpersonal, cognitive, and applied skill areas. These skills can be either primary or complementary to a major and are acquired by students through education, including curricular, co-curricular, and extracurricular activities.*

No specific fields of study are identified but emphasis is placed on high demand/STEM, health professions, and service/technical fields, among others.

5. SBEC

Much discussion was shared regarding the proposed new teacher assessment, edTPA, by SBEC. Many voices of opposition have been expressed across the state and it was suggested that TAMS, in conjunction with TMEA, should put out a statewide call to have those responses submitted to a central repository from which to draft an informed and unified response from TAMS/TMEA at the appropriate time when SBEC puts forth their proposal for public comment, most likely following the February meeting of SBEC.

Subsequent related discussion centered on high teacher attrition rates, reasons for those rates, at what point are we losing teachers? How do the rising certification pass rate requirements/accountability affect recruitment to the teaching profession? Where are the limits of road blocks versus quality control?

6. Future Initiatives for CAGA & TAMS - Increase advocacy component

- Expand the conversation among TAMS membership as to the impact of the 86<sup>th</sup> legislative session relative to legislative priorities and how music and the arts might present their case in competition for resources, particularly in view of the increasing emphasis on workforce development.
- Prepare informed/unified response to edTPA proposal from SBEC for immediate submission for public comment.