

Financial Aid Advisory Committee
Meeting Notes
September 7, 2017

Committee Members in Attendance	Committee Members Absent	THECB Staff	Audience
Delisa Falks Zelma De Leon Christopher Murr Alan Ahmad Doris Constantine Melissa Elliott - Teleconference Audree Hernandez Sandi Jones Rosario Juarez - Teleconference Carolyn Mallory - Teleconference Robert Merino Alan Pixley Cathy Sanchez Kara Tappendorf Diane Todd Sprague - Teleconference Harold Whitis Matthew Vandermause	Jeannie Gage Carl Gordon Anne Walker	Connie Cooper Ken Martin Lesa Moeller Charles Puls DeChà Reid Shebah Spears John Wyatt	

Agenda Item	Critical Discussion Points	Formal Decision/Action Required
B. Consideration of Approval of Minutes of the meeting held on June 1, 2017. Delisa Falks, FAAC Chair	Motion to approve meeting minutes from June 1, 2017.	Minutes approved

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C. Update: Prior FAAC Business Charles Puls, Deputy Assistant Commissioner	<p>Overview: Update on outstanding issues/questions raised at previous meeting.</p> <p>Update: Record's retention – suggestions received from Internal Audit that could decrease retention requirements to fewer than 7 years:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More regular student by student reconciliation (monthly and mandatory) • Reduction in large EOY refunds • Reduction in audit findings that requires scope of audit to expand • Move to an automated process for paying out payments to institutions <p>Prior Business Updates – <u>June 2017 agenda:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legislative proposal process. John Wyatt to discuss in Agenda Item F how proposals move forward in the legislative process. • SB 887 Implementation. Ginger Gossman will provide update on the new notification letter regarding total debt in Agenda Item E. • New Priority deadline rule. Originally set for September's CAAP meeting has now been moved to the December's CAAP meeting for approval. <p><u>February 2017 agenda:</u> FAAC Nomination Process Acknowledgement of members whose term expired:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alan Ahmad • Melissa Elliot 	Committee requested a summary of reasons for returned funds and an average of the same over time. In addition, how many institutions are not performing monthly reconciliation of state funds?

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carl Gordan • Audra Hernandez • Rosario Juarez • Carolyn Mallory • Chris Murr • Harold Whitis <p><u>FAAC Nominations recommended to the Board:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Karla Flores, UTRGV • Bridget Jans, UH • Dana Mingo, Paul Quinn College • Chris Murr, TASFAA • Billy Satterfield UH-Clearlake • Mike Scott, Texas Christian University • Terry Sheneman, Fort Bend ISD • Samantha Stalnaker, Tarrant County College • Christine Stuart-Carruthers, TSTC • Peggy Watts, Temple College • Brent Williford, Blinn College <p>Four year extension of FAAC to October, 2021 was approved by the Board in July.</p> <p>Discussion: With respect to records retention committee advised that THECB should expect more institutions to have more than normal returns due to the ISIR Comment Code 399 issue.</p>	
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<p>D. Presentation: THECB Borrower Notifications</p> <p>Rinn Harper, Director Borrower Services, THECB</p>	<p>Overview: PowerPoint Presentation.</p> <p>Presentation: At a previous FAAC meeting members expressed interest in learning about the state loan information that is presented to student borrowers by the THECB throughout the loan process, from the time of application through repayment. Rinn provided a detailed description of the documents and activities to help students understand the terms and conditions of their loans, including the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online application process requires acknowledgement of the Private Loan Solicitation Disclosure before the application can be completed. Includes interest rate and fees, loan cost examples, interest rates for federal loan alternatives, and other information. • Loan Approval Disclosure, mailed to the borrower after the loan has been certified by the school; borrower must accept terms of the loan before processing can continue. Includes loan amount, interest rate, any fees, estimated repayment schedule and terms, interest rates on federal loan alternatives. • Loan Consummation Disclosure, mailed to the borrower upon his/her acceptance of the Loan Approval Disclosure; this is a federal (Regulation Z) requirement that gives the borrower 11 days to cancel the loan). Includes prominent statement that this is a loan to be repaid, loan amount, interest rate, any fees, estimated repayment schedule, bankruptcy limitations, repayment options, and prepayment information. 	<p>None</p>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loan is disbursed following the waiting period and no cancellation. • Loan Disclosure Statement mailed to the borrower; includes contact information for the THECB and the institution, loan period, anticipated graduation date, any origination fees, interest rate, contract date, summarized disbursement schedule, and language on promise to pay. • Repayment Schedule and Disclosure Statement mailed to borrower during 6-month grace period, approximately 90 days before first payment due date. Includes all loan information included on previous documents, in addition to the amount of interest to be paid, total amount to be repaid, payment schedule, information about late charges, prepayment, credit bureau notification and litigation proceedings. • Monthly Billing Statement mailed to borrower approximately 20 days before the payment due date. Provides account summary including loan type, current payment amount (loan level and total), any past due amount, total fees due, total amount due, total balance, when late fees will be assessed, customer service toll-free number, and payment slip for check or money order. • Due Diligence Notices and Collection Calls – notices for both borrower and cosigner sent every 30 days, beginning at 10 days past due to 150 days past due. Multiple call attempts every 30 days. Returned mail is skip traced and re-mailed. All notices include deferment and forbearance options, as well as consequences of default. Final demand letter from the OAG sent at 150 days past due. At 180 days past due, account is transferred to the OAG for litigation and collection proceedings. <p>Discussion: Do cosigners receive the same disclosures as borrowers? Cosigners receive the repayment schedule disclosure, copies of the monthly billing statements – most of the information that borrowers receive. Approximately 25-30% of CAL loans have cosigners.</p> <p>What information does a borrower see when logging into the account? Borrowers can view information on all loans originated by the THECB, but not loans with other lenders. They can drill down for detailed information at the loan level, a 36-month payment history, and can update mailing address/phone/e-mail address.</p> <p>There was a discussion about returned mail and the possibility of more electronic communications in place of regular mail. Maintaining updated e-mail addresses is a challenge.</p> <p>A suggestion was made that providing a summary of the loan information and the average monthly payment would be helpful. Staff will explore how information viewed by the borrower online could be made more clear.</p>	
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	<p>Is the Board considering identifying enrolled students who are at higher risk of defaulting, to perhaps intervene and lower that risk? This has been discussed, but no plans have been made. The THECB is not able to guess which students might someday default.</p> <p>A suggestion was made to analyze the "click rate" for electronic communications.</p> <p>Chad informed members about actions that the THECB is taking to assist borrowers living in zip codes declared as disaster areas due to Hurricane Harvey:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suppressing due diligence calls and letters that otherwise would be made/sent to past due borrowers in these areas • Due diligence e-mail is being sent to these borrowers but it includes a notice to contact our office if they have been affected and need assistance • Staff are not skip tracing returned mail from these zip codes • Lenience in granting administrative forbearance for affected borrowers; yesterday e-mail sent to 12,000 borrowers with addresses in affected zip codes, encouraging them to contact us • Past due accounts are brought current in addition to 3-month periods of forbearance (no documentation is needed, just a verbal request) <p style="text-align: center;">For the most delinquent accounts, for borrowers in 880 disaster area zip codes, borrowers were granted a forbearance without their request</p>	
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<p>E. Presentation: SB 887 Implementation – Ginger Gossman, Sr. Director of Innovation and Policy Development</p> <p>Ginger Gossman, Sr. Director, Innovation and Policy Development</p>	<p>Overview: Update on implementation of SB 887</p> <p>Presentation: E-mail sent to members in July providing an overview of the bill - what will be required in the electronic letter and the THECB's role in implementing the law. This was also sent to financial aid system vendors.</p> <p>Questions the THECB has received:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are private institutions are required to implement the letter? (Answer: yes) • Do grants count in determining if an institution must implement the letter? (Answer: yes – grants that are state financial aid) • Ginger is working on a document comparing the Texas law with similar legislation in other states and will share it with institutions so that they may contact their colleagues in other states for advice. (Indiana has the most comprehensive statute – Texas is not far behind.) 	<p>Note: After the conclusion of the meeting, agency staff determined that electronic communication that required a student to login to review the loan information would meet the intent of the legislation.</p>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A webinar is being planned, with participation by Indiana University staff, to help institutions implement the law.• Administrative rules will be drafted this month.• The draft template of the letter will be based on the Indiana University template, modified to meet requirements of the Texas law. Ginger would like to hear any suggestions from institutions regarding the template.• WGU already has this electronic communication in place for multiple states. WGU offered to share their source code for this tool, at no cost. Ginger will discuss this option with leaders of this committee.• Ginger is presenting on this topic at the fall TASFAA Conference. <p>Discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• If a school is using a portal that students can log into, and the school sends students an e-mail that tells them they can log in to access this information, does that meet the letter of the law? Ginger believes it does, but she will check on this for the committee.• Do you know any details on the tool that WGU has? WGU presented to THECB staff what it looks like but THECB staff does not have further details. WGU is working on its portal to meet the Indiana requirements.• Is there any information on the topic of the THECB providing loan data access to institutions? There has been no action on this because some institutions expressed concerns about making data available that they would then have to incorporate all of it into their letters.	
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<p>F. External Relations Update</p> <p>John Wyatt, Director External Relations</p>	<p>Overview/Update: Legislation Update and Process</p> <p>Discussion:</p> <p><u>Legislative Update:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No higher education topics included in the Special Session. • 2nd Special Session highly unlikely. • Agencies will soon begin working on the legislature's interim charges, which will be announced on Sep 22. <p><u>Process and principles in developing legislative recommendations:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The process for determining recommendations for next session has already begun. • ER works w/each division on issues and items to be addressed; communicating with knowledgeable staff to obtain input and information; communicate with Commissioner and the Board – how to take to a recommendation to legislature; boil it down. • 3 main principles in developing recommendations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Does it contribute to the goals of 60X30TX? ➢ Is it an efficient use of taxpayer dollars? ➢ Is it a legislative possibility – does it address a real need and is it actually possible? • Hurricane Harvey -what will be the impact on the state's budget? • 3 categories of recommendations where issues will fall: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cat 1 – Big Cat 2 – Programmatic Cat 3 – Clean-up (SAP issue would be cleanup) <p><u>Financial aid-related issues: suggestions for the next session:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Align SAP and controlled substances requirements in TXG and TEOG with federal guidelines - institutions will need to look at the \$\$ impact. • Some institutions concerned that their comments re: TEXAS Grant and TEOG recommendations proposed last session were not considered. ER explained that their concerns were heard, however, they were provided too late to adjust final recommendations. FAAC must provide its recommendations and feedback to CB <i>prior</i> to final recommendations being proposed. Early discussions are critical to the process. • CB reaches out for input from informed stakeholders, including the universities, Texas Assoc. of Counselors, and others. Because the FAAC is not a lobbying organization, institutions should work with its organizations to ensure concerns are addressed. • FAAC members should be thinking about the types of things influencing discussions (ex- shutdown of BOT). <p><u>Potential topics SFAP has identified for next session include:</u></p>	<p>Next FAAC Meeting:</p>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undocumented students – this will be a topic for next time. CB does not yet know what may be proposed for TXG and TEOG. The Commissioner and the Board will have some recommendations. • TX WORKS - the Commissioner and the Board are very supportive of this initiative and the CB will most likely recommend it again next time. • Gap created by BOT phase-out - FA community needs to think about how to fill that gap. <p>CB would like to receive input from the FAAC and/or institutions as proposals move forward. If a member believes that the Board is going in the wrong direction, members need to inform the Board by calling Chad; don't wait until the next committee meeting to address concerns. FAAC can provide valuable feedback.</p>	
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<p>G. Presentation: Checks and Balances of Loan Reconciliation</p> <p>DeChà Reid, Director, Financial Aid Services</p>	<p>Discussion: Update:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BOT & CAL – FAS completed reconciliation of accounts for 2010-2016. This involved reconciling disbursements in FADS against HELMS. • FAS will be moving reconciliation activities into FADS for FY2017. FAS will be sending out information on Sep 15 regarding total funds disbursed for FY 2017. This will assist in certifying FADS. • Loan programs have been incorporated into the Return of Funds Form (RFF) process. FAS uses the RFF to confirm – on a monthly basis - that the amount reported was returned and applied. • FAS is working with institutions requesting special reports to assist with reconciliation of \$ awarded and applied to student's accounts. FAS recently 	

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	<p>implemented a written documentation process to handle requests for loan changes/cancellations (rather than by phone).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If a school needs to verify that a return has been made, it's best to contact FAS to confirm. FAS will reach out to notify institutions when they need to review a student's record to confirm that a return has been applied correctly. • Regarding 399 ISIR Comment Codes – if institution returns funds after Sep 15, it must submit a new report. If prior to Sep 9, need to reconcile (revise) EOY for 2016-17. • Currently, the RFF is a PDF – will be moving to an online form; FAS will send notification. 	
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<p>H. Update: Office of Student Financial Aid Programs</p> <p>Charles Puls, Deputy Assistant Commissioner</p>	<p>Update: SFAP activity</p> <p>Borrower Services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identified a new IVR (Interactive voice response system) and have executed a contract. It should be up and running by end of this calendar year. • Updating our on-line payment system to accept Visa payments with a soft launch on Monday 9/11/2017. Notification will go out to borrowers once we see it is successful in a few weeks. • Due to our new system we made it through our loan origination peak season without exceeding our goal of 3 days turnaround on originations despite shortage of staff, employment freeze and implementing a new system. We also experienced a signification reduction of wet signature. • Reached out to the borrowers effected by Hurricane Harvey. <p>Financial Aid Services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FY18 Program Guidelines were issued in July 2017 • End of Year processed was completed in July 2017 • Wrapped up the MOU processed, institutions set to receive funds. • FY18 payments have begun to be sent to campus for Grants and Scholarships. • Sent out notices to Institutions effected by Hurricane Harvey regarding financial aid by relaxation of the timely disbursement processing. Also, asked if an institution are not on our list but need assistance to reach out to us. We gave them additional time to send back funds as well. <p>General Office Group</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Continuing to update the rule for the recent legislative activities regarding retiring unnecessary rules. We are making sure current rules are accurate. <p>Upcoming Primary Activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This fall we will launch our strategic planning programs regarding, Compliance, Customer, Culture 	

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	<p>and Communications. For our current strategic plan, we'll have accomplished 12 of the 14 strategies.</p> <p>Discussion:</p> <p>Speaker Rissa McGuire, Ph.D., Executive Director-Council of Public University Presidents and Chancellors (CPUPUC). CPUPUC, along with ICUT and TACC and other agencies have set up an emergency Financial Aid through GoFundMe</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GoFundMe called Harvey HELP (Higher Education Learning Pathways) which is for raising money for emergency aid to help supplement the emergency aid on campuses. • Funds will be sent to campuses for distribution along with their emergency aid funds procedure on who receive these awards • Need to identify who to distribute the funds to the campuses. 	
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Agenda Item	Critical Discussion Points	Formal Decision/Action Required
<p>I. Presentation: Annual Reports (Financial Aid and TEXAS Grant)</p> <p>Charles Puls, Deputy Assistant Commissioner</p>	<p>Update and Highlights:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • During Legislature years our focus is on updated the statistics to the Texas Grants and Annual Financial Aid Reports. • The Texas Grant program shows that the Hispanic population has increased, the white population has decreased and the African American population has stayed the same, which aligns with overall enrollment. • Texas Grant: Half the funding going to families with zero EFC's and over 90% going to families with EFC below \$4000.00 • Priority model does not appear to have impacted distribution across race or ethnicity. • Number of priority model of recipients have remained leveled from FY16 to FY17 despite the growth of Texas Grant awards. • Tracking in grant retention with in the priority model show that the high priority students have a higher retention rate than basic eligibility students. • We are seeing multi-million dollar variance in exemption waiving reporting from what is on the FADs and IFRS reports. We will be working with institutions regarding these reports • This data is important when we present to the Legislature. Without good data they may not grant us the funding that we need. <p>Discussion:</p> <p>Thoughts on the Priority Model and why it is reaching the plateau for the Texas Grant.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The legislative changes (e.g. HB5) could have caused the plateau • Changes in SAT scores could have effected it. <p>TPEG spike:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Could be an increase of students attending 4-year and 2-year community colleges were the 4-year colleges had to spend more funds. 	

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some institutions may have determined they were not spending enough money and decide to award more funds. 	
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<p>J. Data Collection Sub-Committee</p> <p>Doris Constantine, Sub-Committee Chair</p> <p>DeCha Reid, Director Financial Aid Services</p>	<p>Update:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Sub-Committee is now in phase 2 - beta testing. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This phase is critical and the hope is to have a good representation of people who are willing to be beta testers. Send contact information to DeCha Reid if willing to be a beta tester. Data testing will be from October thru mid-November. It is encouraged to look through the FY 2018 FADs Manual, reach out to those who are heavily involved with reporting and to ask any programming or reporting questions as soon as possible. Emails can be sent to DeCha Reid. In October DeCha Reid will be doing a reporting presentation at TASFA with Tanya Trevino. Crossover reporting will occur since FY 2017 FADs closes 12/11/2017 and FY 2018 FADs opens up 12/1/2017. DeCha Reid will make a proactive measure over the next several months to ensure institutions have the ability to close out FY 2017 FADs so institutions can then focus their attention on FY 2018 FADs. There will be a phase 3 for the sub-committee. This phase is to significantly improve the efficiency with how THECB processes funds for institutions as well as the ability to track the information. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The goal is to develop a reporting process where institutions send THECB a simple file with basic elements for all students who disbursed funds or for students who have funds ready to disburse, automatically load it into the THECB system, compare it to what has already been sent to the institutions and then send out the amount of money that is needed. This will continuously build a student by student file that will always be available for reconciliation purposes. The sub-committee will use lessons learned from the FADs process. There is no launch date yet. <p>Discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Member noted that the change to FY 2018 FADs is significant and the smaller schools without well-established IT staff should look to be beta testers and ask any questions as soon as possible. DeCha Reid stated she can reach out to any necessary vendors to make sure they understand the differences in the FY 2018 FADs report if needed. 	<p>FAS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> DeCha Reid will be presenting at the TASFA Conference in October. Financial Aid Services will answer any questions on closing out FY 2017 FADs or new processes for FY 2018 FADs from institutions or vendors. <p>Institutions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Look through the FY 2018 FADs Manual. Go back to institutions and ask for beta testers. Reach out to those who are heavily involved with reporting and see if they have any questions. Send emails to DeCha.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Member suggested that THECB might need to put message out to Presidents indicating the resources that may be required for the upcoming changes. • Member inquired about available training for those not attending TASFA. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Two THECB trainers will go out to institutions starting in October. ○ THECB will put together webinars. ○ Onsite training at THECB will be available. • A training request form can be found on the student financial aid website. 	
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<p>K. Discussion: FAAC Meeting Attendance (actual vs. virtual)</p> <p>Delisa Falks, FAAC Chair</p>	<p>Discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would like to set the expectation that the committee members be present at the committee meetings. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Signing on to the committee is a commitment and asking for members to honor that commitment. ○ Dates for meetings are published well in advance. ○ Understand things come up but members need to manage schedules as much as possible. ○ Expectation will be passed on to new members of the committee. 	<p>None</p>

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<p>L. Discussion: Potential for aligning state and federal financial aid eligibility requirements (satisfactory academic progress and controlled substance convictions)</p> <p>Delisa Falks, FAAC Chair</p>	<p>Discussion: Alignment of federal and state aid requirements.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Control Substance question: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Currently the "control substance abuse" question for TEXAS Grant Program applicants is also present on the FAFSA. Possible alignment of requirements reduces the burden on the student. • Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ SAP standards are not the same between state programs as well as federal programs. (<i>i.e., students who meet the regular federal SAP requirements may not meet the SAP eligibility requirements for a state grant program</i>). SAP requirements also vary between state programs, therefore possible alignment of statutes may reduce the burden on the student. 	<p>Committee to consider putting forth recommendations to the legislature concerning changes to statute(s) that would address aligning federal and state aid requirements.</p> <p>Committee's recommendations should also consider how to use the financial aid programs to incentivize completion.</p> <p>Subcommittee to be formed to look at legislative review. Delisa Falk will chair the committee and seek out other volunteers for the committee.</p>

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<p>M. Transition of Leadership</p> <p>Delisa Falks, FAAC Chair</p>	<p>Chair thanked committee members and the Coordinating Board staff for all their participation and help during her term as Chair, as well as her appreciation of the recent approval to extend the FAAC for 4 more years.</p> <p>Zelma De Leon will now serve as committee Chair.</p>	

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N. Adjournment Delisa Falks, FAAC Chair	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Next FAAC meeting set for December 8, 2017. • Adjournment at 12:56 pm. 	First agenda item in December will be to elect a vice chair.