Texas Application for State Financial Aid Advisory Committee (TASFAAC)
Meeting Notes
July 8, 2020
(Approved July 31, 2020 TASFAAC Meeting)

The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) Texas Application for State Financial Aid Advisory Committee (TASFAAC) convened at 10:02 a.m. on July 8, 2020, with the following committee members present: Courtney Balderas, Abraham Diaz, Lauren Discher, Demetra Durham, Phillip Fabian, Maria (Paloma) Garner, Victoria Graham, Don Hilton, Gordon Lipscomb, Ines Lopez, Ariela Martinez, Angelica Melendez, Tammy Mitchum, Judith Moncivais, Kristal Nicholson, Federico (Fred) Pena, Erin Porter, Erica Denae Ramos, Ed Turney, Ociel Vazquez, and Shannon Venezia.

Members Absent: Lisa Ann Schoenbrun

ApplyTexas Technical Team Members: Graham Chapman and David Muck

Community Stakeholder(s): Alexis Bauserman, Texas Education Agency

THECB Staff: Diana Foose, Claudette Jenks, and Lisa Paiz.

Agenda Item 1. Welcome and Introductions	Claudette Jenks, THECB Staff
Handout Provided: No	**Formal Decision/Action Required: N/A**
Claudette Jenks called meeting to order and welcomed committee members and guests. Committee members and invited attendees provided introductions.	

Agenda Item 2. Overview of Advisory Committee Roles and Responsibilities	Claudette Jenks, THECB Staff
Handout Provided: Yes	**Formal Decision/Action Required: N/A**

Critical Discussion Points:
- THECB is tasked with leading the charge of developing the TASFA online and integrating it into the ApplyTX System per House Bill 2140, 86th Texas Legislature.
- Claudette Jenks reviewed the purpose of the committee. The tasks assigned to the committee include making recommendations to the Board on the procedures, development, associated costs of the TASFA online; and consideration of the technical and functional revisions of ApplyTexas in regard to the development of the online TASFA. The committee is required to meet three times a year and can meet as needed to complete the recommendations to the board.
- Claudette Jenks reviewed the Division of Labor, explaining the roles of the committee, University of Texas at Austin ApplyTX staff who will be available to assist the committee with technical and functional discussions in integrating the TASFA within ApplyTX and additional stakeholders, including the Texas Education Agency staff, who will assist in alignment of the House Bill 3 FAFSA/TASFA high school graduation requirement.

Agenda Item 3. Selection of Committee Chair and Co-Chair	Claudette Jenks, THECB Staff
Handout Provided: No	**Formal Decision/Action Required:** Maria (Paloma) Garner elected Chair Shannon Venezia elected Co-Chair Claudette Jenks will set meeting with Chair and Co-Chair.

Critical Discussion Points:
- Claudette Jenks asked for nominations for TASFAAC Chair
- One nomination was received, Maria Paloma Garner.
- Angelica Melendez motioned, Demetra Durham seconded, and Committee voted Paloma Garner as Chair.
- Claudette Jenks asked for nominations for TASFAAC Co-Chair
- One nomination was received, Shannon Venezia.
- Lauren Discher motioned, Ines Lopez seconded, and Committee voted Shannon Venezia as Co-Chair.
- Claudette Jenks will schedule a meeting to go over additional roles and responsibilities with the Chair and Co-Chair.

Agenda Item 4. Discussion on Procedures, Development, and Associated Costs of Online Texas Application For State Financial Aid	Claudette Jenks, THECB Staff
Handout Provided: Yes	**Formal Decision/Action Required:** Claudette Jenks will revisit budget with UT ApplyTX staff to further discuss associated costs.

Critical Discussion Points:
Claudette Jenks provided an overview of the tasks of the committee.
Procedure Considerations:
- What procedures should the committee establish for the use of the online TASFA? Other considerations include how TASFA data will be collected, processed, transmitted, stored, and utilized.
- Committee recommended the following procedure considerations:
  - Uploading documents, i.e. tax transcripts, verification of selective service.
  - Connect application for selective service via online TASFA.
  - Electronic signature for student and parent and opt out option, other considerations for physical signature.
  - Uniformity of supplemental documents: universities coming to agreement on what documents to accept.
  - Tie to core residency questionnaire.
  - Student certification or ID pin where student signs that information is true and valid
  - Protection of the information and certification that information will not be reported outside the institution.
  - Procedures for when student needs to make correction to the TASFA form, need for updated information, i.e. change in the amount of family income.
  - Considerations for submitting the application to multiple institutions.
  - Try to align with what most schools already have in place with technical capabilities.

- o Graham Chapman – Committee should consider experience of the applicant, limit applicant filling out more information than needed, and consider variance of what institutions request. Think about security questions, how do you ensure institutional capability, what format needed, what software is being used at each institution. How can you make it similar to FAFSA or what institutions have already established?

Development Considerations:
- Claudette Jenks reviewed key milestones and draft timeline to provide recommendations on procedures, development, costs, and technical revisions to the Legislature.
- January to September 2020 is estimated for time for development.
- There may be an opportunity to add more time to submit recommendations.
- Erin Porter- is this committee going to be able to test or other groups testing? Graham Chapman- there will need to be considerations for this new system and need for substantial testing in operation.
- Need to add to the timeline a deadline for technical specifications to software providers on an annual cycle to prepare to implement by October 1. Suggest up to six weeks when considering IT timelines for technical specifications.
- There are existing templates from institutions that have an online TASFA and there is an existing infrastructure that committee can learn from, but committee needs to consider this a new scope of work and think through how to distribute the information.
- Add to the timeline and procedures when the paper TASFA is updated to ensure the online version is aligned. Erin Porter and Fred Pena are on the existing TASFA subcommittee of the THECB Financial Aid Advisory Committee and can be liaisons to inform this recommendation.
- Ed Turney asked can the state contract with a third-party vendor to develop the TASFA? Claudette Jenks stated this would require further discussion. Considering a third-party development would require a procurement process which more than likely will add to the development timeline.
- Committee should also consider in development and timeline, the alignment with House Bill 3, FAFSA/TASFA high school graduation requirement.

Associated Costs
- Claudette Jenks shared there is no budget identified for the development and integration.
- How does the committee propose funding for the TASFA integration?
- Claudette Jenks reviewed the current cost methodology of the ApplyTX System for reference. Would committee consider revising this methodology?
- Consider not every institution uses the ApplyTX System, how would those be able to use the TASFA housed within the system?
- Committee should identify funding to support the development.
- Should committee go to the Legislature for funding?
- Erin Porter recommends seeking funds from the Legislature.
- Claudette Jenks will work with ApplyTX staff to revisit a budget for development.

Agenda Item 5. Discussion On Identifying Technical and Functional Revisions of the ApplyTX System	Claudette Jenks, THECB Staff
Handout Provided: No	Formal Decision/Action Required: N/A

Critical Discussion Points:
Graham Chapman with UT ApplyTX provided an overview of technical and functional revisions needed to the ApplyTX System.
- The ApplyTX System has the Applicant Suite, Administrative Suite, Counselor Suite, internal help desk suite and ways to transmit information.
- Committee should consider what's the scope of the work, who's participating, how information is shared and presented.
- Consider applicant should create a profile without having to submit repetitive information.
- On Administrative Suite, changes would require institution's permissions and who does what. Can there be some institution customization?
- Transmission of information is also open scope of work.
- Consideration of cost to non-users of the ApplyTX Application System.
- Consider if an online TASFA be accepted at the institution the student selects?
- Technical details are also new scope of work; consider how to transmit financial aid information and how the information is presented.
- Valid option for a third-party vendor to create and integrate within ApplyTX.
- Consider TASFA data, is it same place to determine EFC, same file format as FAFSA?
- What systems are there for this information?
- Graham Chapman- about 6 vendors, lots of mechanisms in how to receive information.
- Erin Porter and Ines Lopez-considering transmission of TASFA data, there is already an existing file format as FAFSA. Committee should consider data files come in similar formats as FAFSA and would be easier for upload.

Agenda Item 6. Discussion on Soliciting Input From Stakeholders	Claudette Jenks, THECB Staff
Handout Provided: No	Formal Decision/Action Required: Invite institutions that have an existing online TASFA for panel discussion. Seek feedback for student experience (current college student and in testing process)

Critical Discussion Points:
- Committee would like to hear from institutions with current online TASFA; possible panel discussion with University of Houston, University of North Texas, Texas A&M University San Antonio, University of Texas at Austin, and Texas A&M University to discuss development and implementation. Courtney Balderas could contact at University of Houston. Committee suggest emailing questions for the panel ahead of time. Claudette Jenks can collect the questions prior to the panel discussion.
- Committee would like to hear from institutions that do not use the paper TASFA to find out why they are not using it? Can pull information from the RGV Focus to review.
- Committee interested in hearing student and parent experiences. Segmented groups: college students who have gone through the TASFA process, students who did an online TASFA. Erica Ramos can provide a group of students for student perspectives.

> Also include students currently in the testing the process to provide feedback on making language easier to understand.
- Claudette Jenks suggest breaking work into subcommittees and committee discussed subcommittees be: Application and Application Processing, would include procedures, development, cost. Committee suggest waiting to hear more from others before considering subcommittees. Will move to the next meeting.

Agenda Item 7. Discussion on Potential Agenda Items and Next Meeting Date	Claudette Jenks, THECB Staff
Handout Provided: No	**Formal Decision/Action Required:** THECB staff will send out a poll for future meeting dates. Claudette Jenks will collect questions for panel discussion. Courtney Balderas can provide survey data of student perspectives. Erica Denae Ramos can contact students to share student experiences (in person or written). Claudette Jenks will provide notes by Monday, July 13, 2020.

Critical Discussion Points:
- Committee would like to meet more frequently, possibly two times a month, if October due date stands.
- Claudette Jenks can set meetings considering planning and Open Meeting requests.
- Next meeting will include: Panel of institutions with online TASFA, may be able to get student perspectives.
- THECB staff will send a list of available dates to conduct future meetings.

Agenda Item 8. Adjournment	Claudette Jenks, THECB Staff
Handout Provided: No	**Formal Decision/Action Required: N/A**

Erica Denae Ramos motioned.
Erin Porter seconded.
Committee voted to adjourn at 12:18 p.m.