

Texas Application for State Financial Aid Advisory Committee (TASFAAC)  
 Meeting Notes  
 July 31, 2020  
*(Approved September 9, 2020 TASFAAC Meeting)*

The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) Texas Application for State Financial Aid Advisory Committee (TASFAAC) convened at 10:06 a.m. on July 31, 2020, with the following committee members present: Courtney Balderas, Lauren Discher, Demetra Durham, Phillip Fabian, Maria (Paloma) Garner, Chair, 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, Lisa Ann Schoenbrun, Ed Turney, and Shannon Venezia, Co-Chair

Members Absent: Abraham Diaz and Ociel Vazquez

ApplyTexas Technical Team Members: Graham Chapman

Community Stakeholder(s): Josie Brunner, Texas Education Agency, Thomas Haskins, Senior Associate Director, Texas A&M University San Antonio, Patrick Brantley, Program Coordinator - Financial Aid at Texas A&M University-San Antonio, Abby Crow-Walker, Assistant Director, Financial Aid, University of North Texas.

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

<b>Agenda Item 1. Welcome and Introductions</b>	Maria Paloma Garner, College Access Coordinator, Northside High School, Houston ISD, Committee Chair
<b>Handout Provided: No</b>	<b>Formal Decision/Action Required: N/A</b>
<b>Critical Discussion Points:</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Paloma Garner called meeting to order and welcomed committee members and guests. Committee members and invited attendees provided introductions.</li> </ul>	

<b>Agenda Item 2. Review and Adoption of Minutes for the July 8, 2020 Meeting</b>	Maria Paloma Garner, College Access Coordinator, Northside High School, Houston ISD, Committee Chair
<b>Handout Provided: Yes</b>	<b>Formal Decision/Action Required:</b> On the motion by Lisa Ann Schoenbrun, seconded by Don Hilton, committee approved this item.
<b>Critical Discussion Points:</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Committee reviewed the minutes from July 8, 2020.</li> </ul>	

<b>Agenda Item 3. Panel discussion with institutions of higher education with an eTASFA</b>	Shannon Venezia, Executive Director, Student Financial Aid and Scholarships, Texas Tech University, Committee Co-Chair
<b>Handout Provided: No</b>	<b>Formal Decision/Action Required: N/A</b>
<p><b>Critical Discussion Points:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Panel Discussion with representatives from the Texas A&amp;M University, Texas A&amp;M University-San Antonio, and the University of North Texas, and University of Texas at Austin</li> <li>• Discussed perspectives from varying stages of implementation</li> <li>• Key Questions Discussed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Home grown or vendor</li> <li>○ Cost</li> <li>○ File format used</li> <li>○ Data security</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Key Considerations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ How students would make a correction</li> <li>○ Having a Spanish version is very important</li> <li>○ Students need to feel secure when putting information on an electronic document, information for financial aid purposes only</li> <li>○ Create a dashboard to see if student “started application”</li> <li>○ Use that data to proactively to communicate with students to let them know where they are in the process</li> <li>○ Ability to “re-set” an application for a student if there are errors</li> <li>○ Ask relevant questions and use skip logic</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	

<b>Agenda Item 4. Panel discussion with student users of the eTASFA</b>	Erica Ramos, Financial Aid Officer and College Prep Counselor with PSJA Memorial Early College High
<b>Handout Provided: No</b>	<b>Formal Decision/Action Required: N/A</b>
<p><b>Critical Discussion Points:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Differences between PDF and the E-TASFA <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ PDF was broad, but good. Not as convenient.</li> <li>○ Preferred online version, it was easier.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Experiences with eTASFA <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ No way to submit form, never got email for parent signature because application was on hold</li> <li>○ Unsure how to submit the signature, school said to print and fax the signatures</li> <li>○ Lengthy process- submitting additional documents, application on hold for 3 months, with no contact from school.</li> <li>○ User with English as a 2<sup>nd</sup> language, the questions were complicated.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Recommendations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ More communication from institutions on next steps in process</li> <li>○ Using clear language</li> <li>○ Box for signatures, in the application, not make it a secondary requirement after submission</li> <li>○ Continue to allow print signatures</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	

- Provide modules and/or pre-recorded video with instructions
- Include notes with additional information for each question would be helpful
- Ability to send to several schools, at one time
- Combine Apply TX and eTASFA
- Access to financial aid counselors to assist students, especially first-generation students

<b>Agenda Item 5. Discussion On Identifying Technical and Functional Revisions of the ApplyTX System</b>	Graham Chapman, Executive Director Academic Information Systems, The University of Texas at Austin
<b>Handout Provided: No</b>	<b>Formal Decision/Action Required: N/A</b>
<b>Critical Discussion Points:</b> Graham Chapman with UT ApplyTX provided an overview of technical and functional revisions needed to the ApplyTX System.	

<b>Agenda Item 6. Update on House Bill 3 - FAFSA Advisory Committee</b>	Claudette Jenks, THECB Staff
<b>Handout Provided: No</b>	<b>Formal Decision/Action Required: N/A</b>
<b>Critical Discussion Points:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Claudette Jenks reviewed the high school graduate requirement under House Bill 3. Committee discussed considerations for improving the TASFA and future data tracking.</li> </ul>	

<b>Agenda Item 7. Discussion on developing Sub-Committees</b>	Maria Paloma Garner, College Access Coordinator, Northside High School, Houston ISD, Committee Chair
<b>Handout Provided: No</b>	<b>Formal Decision/Action Required:</b> Erica Ramos volunteered to lead the High School subcommittee Courtney Balderas volunteered to lead the Higher Education subcommittee
<b>Critical Discussion Points:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Committee discussed need for two committees: High School subcommittee to discuss the student experience and the Higher Education subcommittee to discuss the technical and functional part of an online TASFA.</li> </ul>	

<b>Agenda Item 8. Discussion of Potential Agenda Items and Next Meeting Date</b>	Maria Paloma Garner, College Access Coordinator, Northside High School, Houston ISD, Committee Chair
<b>Handout Provided: No</b>	<b>Formal Decision/Action Required: N/A</b>

**Critical Discussion Points:**

- Panel discussion with other states who have a statewide on-line financial aid application
- Discussion of procedure, development, and associated costs for eTASFA
- Updates from subcommittees: Higher Education and High School Student Experience

<b>Agenda Item 9. Adjournment</b>	Maria Paloma Garner, College Access Coordinator, Northside High School, Houston ISD
<b>Handout Provided: No</b>	<b>Formal Decision/Action Required:</b> On the motion by Angelica Melendez, seconded by Erica Ramos, committee approved this item.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Meeting adjourned at 12:11 p.m.</li></ul>	