

FINANCIAL AID ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board

COMMITTEE CHAIR	VICE CHAIR
<p>Robert Merino Dean of Financial Aid San Jacinto Community College District Email: Robert.merino@sjcd.edu Term: 11/01/2016 – 10/31/2021 Robert Merino has a comprehensive awareness of federal and state regulations. He has led projects that improved students' lives, and fully understands the barriers students face as they attempt to be the first members of their family to attend college. Robert embraces the Texas Higher Education Strategic Plan: 60x30TX.</p>	<p>Ed Kerestly Director of Financial Aid Angelo State University Email: ed.kerestly@angelo.edu Term: 12/01/2018-10/31/2021 Over the past eight years, Ed has worked as Director of Financial Aid at both public and private universities in Texas.</p>
PAST CHAIR	
<p>Diane Todd Sprague Director of Financial Aid The University of Texas at Austin Email: DTSprague@austin.utexas.edu Term: 11/01/2016 – 10/31/2020 Diane has 30 years of financial aid experience at several institutions, including the state grant program for the state of Michigan. Diane understands the needs of the university as well as the legislative process. She is able to see the big picture and discuss potentially controversial topics with a balanced voice. Diane has held leadership roles in several state financial aid organizations, as well as working on various task forces and committees for NASFAA.</p>	
THECB REPRESENTATIVE	
<p>Dr. Charles W. Contéro-Puls Deputy Assistant Commissioner Phone: (512) 427-6365 Email: Charles.Contero-Puls@THECB.state.tx.us</p> <p>Dr. Contéro-Puls currently serves as the Deputy Assistant Commissioner for the Office of Student Financial Aid Programs at the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board. The Office of Student Financial Aid Programs was formed in 2015 to bring a greater degree of coordination to the state's financial aid programs (grants, scholarships, loan repayment, work-study, loans, exemptions, waivers, etc.) and is built around the needs of its two primary customers: institutions and borrowers. Prior to arriving at the Coordinating Board, he spent 24 years as a financial aid administrator, working at institutions such as Boston College, University of Massachusetts Boston, Dartmouth College, and Indiana University Bloomington. Most recently Dr. Contéro-Puls spent 10 years as the Associate Dean of College Enrollment and Director of Financial Aid at the University of Rochester.</p>	

FINANCIAL AID ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Tacey Anderson

Assistant Director
Rice University
Email: ta25@rice.edu

Term: 11/01/2019 – 10/31/2020

Tacey has served as Rice University's state programs coordinator, participated in the THECB negotiated rulemaking committee on Tuition Equalization Grant, and as Rice University office's liaison for veterans, Student Success Initiatives, and first-generation student programs. As state programs coordinator, Tacey is responsible for determining student eligibility, awarding and reconciling allocated funds, and completing/submitting state reports (i.e. FADS).

Dr. Ben Bholan

Principal – Arlington ISD
Email: bbholan1@aisd.net

Term: 11/01/2019 – 10/31/2020

Dr. Bholan has been an educator for over 24 years, having a reputation as a leader who improves students' outcomes. He served as the founding principal of our district's first early college high school, Arlington Collegiate High School in which nearly 90% of the first graduating class earned their associate's degree. He now serves as the founding principal of our second early college high school, Arlington College and Career High School. Dr. Bholan is very interested in finding ways to improve the overall financial aid informational processes for parents and students, setting goals and professional development experiences for himself aligned with this area of need.

Shannon Crossland

Senior Director, Compliance & Administration
Student Financial Aid and Scholarships
Texas Tech University
Email: Shannon.crossland@ttu.edu

Term: 06/01/2019 – 10/31/2020

Shannon has served 12 years in the Student Financial Aid Office at Texas Tech University. She has served as a board member and Past President of the Texas Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (TASF AA), she is the President Elect for the Southwest Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (SWASF AA), and a member of the National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (NASF AA). She facilitates an Audit Compliance group of administrative colleagues from public institutions of higher education in the State to prepare for annual state audits when they occur. She has NASF AA credentialing in: Cash Management, Consumer Information, Verification, and Student Eligibility.

Karla Flores

Associate Director of Financial Aid
The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley
Email: karla.flores@utrgv.edu

Term: 12/1/2017 – 10/31/2020

Karla has 20 years of progressive experience with higher education institutions. She has a strong ability to understand and manage regulations gained through her 13 years in financial aid management. Karla developed and implemented a Student Loan Default Management Plan and established a Default Management Task Force, resulting in campus wide default aversion involvement and lower default rates for the institution.

FINANCIAL AID ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board

<p>Paul Galyean Director of Financial Aid Jacksonville College Email: pgalyean@jacksonville-college.edu Term: 12/01/2018-10/31/2021 Paul currently serves as Director of Financial Aid at Jacksonville College.</p>	<p>Rachele Garrett Director of Financial Aid Stephen F. Austin University Email: nixonhr@sfasu.edu Term: 12/01/2018-10/31/2022 In Ms. Garrett's role as Financial Aid Director and with the help of those in her division, she has worked tirelessly to lower student debt. By staying in touch with several state entities, Rachele has also initiated steps to help reduce SFAs parent loan debt amounts. Her knowledge of the financial aid process has also been instrumental in helping to secure needed financial aid for students who enroll in SFAs summer bridge program. Rachele's leadership efforts have also resulted in her department being available for presentations during campus orientations. She also is part of the SFA Road Show that travels to various off-campus events detailing the importance of completing FASFA applications, adhering to timelines, and providing various pathways to assist students on how to best use their financial aid awards.</p>
<p>Heidi Granger Assistant Vice president, Student Financial Services The University of Texas at El Paso Email: hgranger@utep.edu Term: 12/01/2018-10/31/2021 Ms. Granger has over 20 years of experience in the financial aid profession. She has a unique background as her work experiences span all of the higher education sectors; including, public and private 4-year institutions, public community colleges and proprietary schools. In addition, Heidi worked for the U.S. Department of Education in Washington, DC, as a member of the Direct Loan Task Force and as a financial aid auditor. She also served as a senior consultant specializing in financial aid for the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (AACRAO).</p>	

FINANCIAL AID ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board

<p>Lyn Kinyon President of TASFAA Email: lyn.wheelerkinyon@uta.edu Term: 11/01/2019-10/31/2020 Ms. Kinyon has served 39 years in the financial aid profession working at several of the four-year public and private institutions in Texas. In addition to her experience at the institutional level, she has worked directly with the state financial aid programs while working in the Grants and Special Programs division of the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board. In addition to her financial aid experience, Ms. Kinyon has served TASFAA in many capacities as a committee member and/or chair, treasurer, vice-president, president, trainer, presenter, etc.</p>	<p>Tam Nguyen Financial Aid Counselor University of North Texas Health Science Center Email: tam.nguyen@unthsc.edu Term: 12/01/2018-10/31/2021 Tam has a Bachelor of Science in Economics from the University of Texas at Arlington. She has four years of experience working in the financial aid industry. Her current and former positions include undergraduate and graduate institutions in the state sector. For the last three years she has worked at the University of Texas at Arlington as a Financial Aid Counselor. Tam is currently UNT HSC's scholarship coordinator.</p>
<p>Shonna Norton Director of Social & Emotional Services Wichita Falls ISD Email: snorton@wfisd.net Term: 03/01/2020-10/31/2020 In her role with WFISD, Mrs. Norton has streamlined and organized the district's process of informing parents and students about their college and career options, including financial aid. She plans and organizes District events for college readiness, financial aid, dual credit, college application, and FAFSA completion in order to ensure all families are receiving the same information and level of service. Her previous work experience in academic guidance, college and career advising, campus administration, and district administration gives her a unique perspective on helping students and parents receive the information and services they need.</p>	<p>Thomas Ratliff Director of Student Financial Services Abilene Christian University Email: thomas.ratliff@acu.edu Term: 11/01/2019-10/31/2022 New to Texas, Mr. Ratliff came to Abilene Christian University with 30 years of Financial Aid administration experience from proprietary, public and private universities. Before coming to Texas, Thomas served for 13 years on the Indiana Student Financial Aid Administrators Governmental Relations Committee contributing to student aid policy discussions for the Indiana Commission for Higher Education.</p>
<p>Samantha Stalaker District Director of Student Financial Aid Services Tarrant County College Email: samantha.stalaker@tccd.edu Term: 12/1/2017 – 10/31/2020 Samantha has been in financial aid for over 22 years and has spent the last 14 years at Tarrant County College working directly with state financial aid programs. As the District Director of Student Financial Aid Services, she provides district-wide leadership for the Financial Aid Department. She is responsible for compliance with all federal and state financial aid regulations.</p>	<p>Kelly Steelman Director of Financial Aid Amarillo College Email: k0151162@actx.edu Term: 12/01/2018-10/31/2021 Kelly serves as Director of Financial Aid at Amarillo College.</p>

FINANCIAL AID ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board

<p>Dr. Christine Stuart-Carruthers VP for Student Development/Chief Enrollment Service Officer Texas State Technical College Email: Christine.Stuart-Carruthers@tstc.edu Term: 12/1/2017 – 10/31/2020 Christine has worked in higher education for 16 years and has spent the last five in Enrollment Services at Texas State Technical College. Currently, Christine oversees Financial Aid, Admissions & Records, Testing & Advisement, and New Student Outreach at all ten locations. She works with all areas related to enrollment and provides guidance on how policy changes will affect financial aid.</p>	<p>Dr. Joy Thomas Associate Director of Financial Aid Prairie View A&M University Email: jdthomas@pvamu.edu Term: 11/01/2019-10/31/2022 Dr. Thomas is interested in improving operational processes by utilizing technology and the use of unconventional resources to improve the efficiency of the financial aid process. Through the leadership of Dr. Thomas, Prairie View was able to commence the financial aid 2019-2020 awarding/packaging process earlier for both incoming and returning students. Dr. Thomas is involved in activities related to improving the overall student experience. Dr. Thomas volunteers her time to work with student associations to provide guidance and support to facilitate open communication with various constituents at Prairie View A&M University.</p>
<p>Dr. Formon Thompson Dean of Enrollment Management Midland College Email: ftompson@midland.edu Term: 11/01/2019-10/31/2022 Dr. Thompson is passionate about students and their success. His professional experience in a variety of financial aid offices and as the administrator of enrollment management make him an ideal member of this committee. Dr. Thompson is a process developer and trainer; promoting consistency and fairness.</p>	<p>Denise Welch Director, Financial Aid Panola College Email: dwelch@panola.edu Term: 12/01/2018-10/31/2021 Denise has served as Director of Financial Aid at Panola College for more than ten years.</p>
<p>Brent Williford Dean Financial Aid and Scholarships Blinn College Email: brent.williford@blinn.edu Term end: 12/1/2017 – 10/31/2020 Mr. Williford has over 19 years in financial aid management positions, working in all aspects of financial aid at Blinn College, Lamar University, and Texas A&M. Over the last 8 years, he was a lead in implementing Banner at Lamar University, overhauling the processing at the Texas A&M Veteran Services Office in College Station and making significant processing changes at Blinn College. Additionally, he served on the Texas Educational Opportunity Grant Program Negotiated Rule Making Committee in July 2015. Brent continues to work on behalf of his students, providing good customer service while maintaining strict compliance with state and federal laws and regulations.</p>	

FINANCIAL AID ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES

Marilyn Abedrabbo

Collin County Community College District

Email: mabedrabbo1@collin.edu

Term: Term: 06/01/2018 – 05/31/2020

Marilyn Abedrabbo plans to earn an associate degree and transfer to the University of North Texas to earn a bachelor's degree in interdisciplinary education. Ultimately, she hopes to teach and work for a nonprofit organization. President of the college's Muslim Student Organization, she was named to the dean's list in 2017.

Johnathan A. Cereceres

University of Texas at El Paso

Email: jacereceres@miners.utep.edu

Term: 06/01/2018 – 05/31/2020

Jonathan attends the University of Texas at El Paso and plans to graduate in May 2019. As the Financial Aid Advisory Committee's Student Representative, he is most concerned with the retention and completion of higher education for first generation students. Johnathan feels that first generation students are less likely to attend a four-year institution and yet more likely to drop out before completing their degree program. Johnathan believes that first generation students must also adjust to breaking the "intergenerational continuity" in which the knowledge and customs passed down from previous generations must be reconfigured to encourage access to higher education, and with the proper support and resources will assist students in becoming successful members of our communities.