

Financial Aid Advisory Committee  
September 14, 2023, Meeting Notes

Committee Members in Attendance (In-Person)	Committee Members in Attendance (Virtual)	Committee Members Absent
Melet Leafgreen, Chair Rachelè Garrett, Past Chair DeChà Reid, THECB Rep Amy Wilson Scott Lapinski Rachel Joseph Jackie Kelly Heather Fountain Michelle Hill Tonya Richardson Dean Beth Tolan	Jackie Adler Cecelia Jones Lisa Ann Schoenbrun Gilbert Zavala Tevian Sides Gaby Leon Erica Ramos Leah Smalley, THECB Rep Rebeca Moreno Adorno Mary Escobar	Sal Ramirez Lynda McKendree Dede Gonzales
<b>Agenda Item 1. Welcome, Introductions and Overview of Meeting</b>		<b>Melet Leafgreen, Chair</b>
Handout Provided: No		Formal Decision/Action Required No
<b>Agenda Item 2. Consideration of Approval of Minutes from the meeting held on June 1, 2023</b>		<b>Melet Leafgreen, Chair</b>
Handout Provided: Yes		Formal Decision/Action Required <i>Yes – minutes approved</i>
<b>Summary:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No corrections were identified.</li> <li>• **See handout for agenda item 2 for more information.</li> </ul>		
<b>Agenda Item 3. Update: Prior FAAC Business</b>		<b>DeChà Reid, Director III, THECB</b>
Handout Provided: No		Formal Decision/Action Required No
<i>Standing Item</i> <b>Update Summary:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No prior business</li> </ul>		
<b>Agenda Item 4. Update: External Relations</b>		<b>John Wyatt, External Relations, THECB</b>
Handout Provided: No		Formal Decision/Action Required No
<i>Standing Item</i> <b>Update Summary:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Senate is sitting on the Board of Impeachment</li> <li>• The Governor will call for a special session in October based on items that he would like resolved</li> <li>• Currently in the ADA Interim during the session, the Lt. Governor and Speaker of the house took a look at specific charges to committees to look at for the next session. Committees will hold hearings over the issues for the next session; The THECB is heavily involved in providing data to the committees but will inform FAAC about</li> <li>• After each session there is a link about the session and all the bills passed <a href="https://www.texas.gov/newsroom/2023/09/14/summary-of-higher-education-legislation">Summary of Higher Education Legislation (texas.gov)</a></li> </ul>		
<b>Agenda Item 5. Update: THECB Financial Aid Strategic Priority</b>		<b>Charles Contero-Puls, Assistant Commissioner, THECB</b>
Handout Provided: No		Formal Decision/Action Required No
<i>Standing Item</i> <b>Update Summary:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No updates on strategic priority at this time</li> </ul>		
<b>Agenda Item 6. Update: TASFA Subcommittee House Bill 3 (FAFSA/TASFA Graduation Requirement) and House Bill 2140 (Online TASFA)</b>		<b>Claudette Jenks, Director, Strategic Advising and Leah Smalley, Director, THECB</b>
Handout Provided: No		Formal Decision/Action Required No
<i>Standing Item</i> <b>Update Summary:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Launched the 2023-24 Online TASFA</li> </ul>		

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have about 576 people created the account; 200 students have submitted the TASFA</li> <li>• Schools need to go into MOVEit to retrieve the files to see if the students qualify for state aid</li> <li>• Launch a survey on the TASFA webpage; still finalizing the survey and will send it out when it is ready</li> <li>• Building an Admin portal for internal staff</li> <li>• The goal is to build an external portal for staff to log into the portal to look up information on the students</li> <li>• 2024-25 TASFA changes have been finalized by the agency; plan to contact the TASFA Subcommittee to make sure that there are no concerns with the changes</li> <li>• Will send the changes to FAAC to provide any feedback before the paper TASFA is created</li> <li>• The Online development is going to align with FAFSA</li> <li>• Will release the paper TASFA once ED post the FAFSA; both English and Spanish</li> <li>• Have identified 20 questions to eliminate but will ask a few questions that will still be helpful to the schools <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Do not plan to remove the housing status</li> <li>○ Selective Service has not gone away for the state aid so that will stay</li> <li>○ Minimal movement of the questions in the paper</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Plan to release the draft TASFA to schools in advance and launch the final version to the public when ED launches the FAFSA</li> </ul>	
<b>Agenda Item 7. Update: Data Collection Subcommittee</b>	<b>Dede Gonzales, Subcommittee Chair</b>
<b>Handout Provided: Yes</b>	<b>Formal Decision/Action Required</b> No
<i>Standing Item</i> <b>Update Summary:</b> **See handout for agenda item 7 for more information	
<b>Agenda Item 8. Update: Legislative Subcommittee</b>	<b>Melet Leafgreen, Subcommittee Chair</b>
<b>Handout Provided: No</b>	<b>Formal Decision/Action Required</b> No
<i>Standing Item</i> <b>Update Summary:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No updates at this time</li> </ul>	
<b>Agenda Item 9. Update: Texas Association for State Financial Aid Administrators (TASFAA)</b>	<b>Denise Welch, TASFAA President-Elect</b>
<b>Handout Provided: No</b>	<b>Formal Decision/Action Required</b> No
<i>Standing Item</i> <b>Update Summary:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• TASFAA/SWASFAA Conference is a joint conference from 10/4-10/6 in DFW</li> <li>• Action packed agenda, NASFAA Speakers; not sure about ED based on potential shut-down glooming (a recorded broadcast)</li> <li>• Free conference workshop- NAOBW; Certification Exam for FAA for NASFAA Credential</li> </ul>	
<b>Agenda Item 10. Update: High School District</b>	<b>Lisa Schoenbrun, El Paso ISD; Erica Ramos, Pharr-San Juan-Alamo ISD</b>
<b>Handout Provided: No</b>	<b>Formal Decision/Action Required</b> No
<i>Standing Item</i> <b>Update Summary:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The high school students were focused on the Oct. 1 deadline from ED but since the changes it has impacted scholarships or SCC profiles that students cannot pay for</li> <li>• There is a lot of confusion on the deadline dates for FAFSA</li> <li>• Sending out a lot of communication from the high schools and the colleges to support each other with the transition of deadline date</li> </ul>	
<b>Agenda Item 11. Update: Office of Student Financial Aid Programs</b>	<b>DeChà Reid, Director III, THECB</b>
<b>Handout Provided: No</b>	<b>Formal Decision/Action Required</b> No
<i>Standing Item</i> <b>Topics of Discussion:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Grant Application and Payment Portal (GAPP)</li> </ol>	

2. New Staff Hires
3. Released and Upcoming Announcement
4. Upcoming and Past Deadline Dates

**Grant Application and Payment Portal (GAPP)**

- GAPP is a modernized platform that will integrate 14 out of 20 of the financial aid programs which consist of grants, work-study, loan GAPP is a modernized central platform that will integrate a variety of the financial aid programs which consist of grants, work-study, loan repayment, exemption, and scholarships.
- The system will allow institutions to approve user access, upload documents (e. g. program participation), request payments, monitor program spending, send communication directly to THECB staff, and submit authority to transfer request.
- The goal is to go live with the three Grant programs, State Work-study Programs, Educational Aide, and Bilingual Education.
- We are working on an announcement to release to schools. We have a few minor items that we are finalizing with the Grant and Aide Processing Platform (GAPP), but the goal is to get an announcement out soon. The first step once we make an announcement is to create your account as a Primary Point of Contact if you are the Financial Aid Director. If you have done so already, we can encourage everyone to review the latest webcast that we released for Aug. 24, which provides a high-level overview of GAPP and the Aug. 31, 2023, webcast that discusses the User Roles for GAPP.
- Question asked by Charles on what is the drop-dead date for not requesting funds for an institution?
  - Could there be a survey on the deadline date?
  - Implementation Date of GAPP to send out by Monday, 9/21

**Financial Aid Personnel Activity**

- THECB has been busy with hiring and promoting internal staff. Charles mentioned our recent reorganization; we are continuing to look at how best to structure our area to fit the needs of our customers and the agency.

**Released Announcements**

- August 21, 2023 – [Memo: State Financial Aid Process Updates, Reminders & Resources](#)
- August 24, 2023- [Memo: Future Occupations & Reskilling Workforce Advancement to Reach Demand \(FORWADR\) Loan Interest Rate Change](#)
- August 24, 2023- [Memo: College Access Loan \(CAL\) Interest Rate Change](#)
- August 29, 2023- [Memo: UPDATE: State Financial Aid FY 2025 Priority Deadline](#)
- August 31, 2023- [Memo: Financial Aid for Swift Transfer \(FAST\) Program FY 2024 Participation Agreement](#)

From <https://www.highered.texas.gov/our-work/supporting-our-institutions/student-financial-aid-programs/stay-connected/>

**Upcoming Memos**

- September 21, 2023 – [Memo: 2023-24 State Campus-Based Annual Report](#)
- October 4, 2023- [Memo: Grant and Aid Processing Platform \(GAPP\)](#)
- 2023-24 User Access Annual Review
- 2023 FAD Cycle 3-Opens

**Upcoming deadlines**

- FAST Program Participation Agreement: 9/29
- 2023 FAD Cycle 3 opens on 9/20 and the Initial File Submission for FY23 Cycle deadline: 10/6 to 10/16
- FAST Educationally Disadvantaged Confirmation Roster: 10/15

**Past Deadlines**

- None.

<b>Agenda Item 12. Discussion Topic: Selection of Vice-Chair and Subcommittee Chairs</b>	<b>Melet Leafgreen, Chair</b>
<b>Handout Provided: No</b>	<b>Formal Decision/Action Required</b> No
<b>Discussion Summary:</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This topic will discuss and vote on the next FAAC Vice-Chair and Subcommittee Chairs           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ TASFAA Subcommittee-Heather Fountain               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Rachele Garrett-Motion and Scott Lapinski- Second AYES win</li> </ul> </li> <li>○ Legislative Subcommittee-Scott Lapinski               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Lisa Ann-Motion and Rachele Garrett Second AYES Win</li> </ul> </li> <li>○ Vice-Chair FAAC-Cecilia Jones               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Amy Wilson- Motion and Jackie Kelley Second AYES Win</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> </ul>	

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<b>Agenda Item 13. Discussion Topic: Overview of the FAST Program</b>	<b>Charles Contero-Puls, Assistant Commissioner, THECB</b>
<b>Handout Provided: Yes</b>	<b>Formal Decision/Action Required</b> No
<p><b>Discussion Summary:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This topic will discuss the Financial Aid for Swift Transfer (FAST) program which provides funding to participating public institutions of higher education, as defined under <a href="#">Texas Education Code (TEC) 61.003(8)</a> so they can offer dual credit courses to educationally disadvantaged students at no cost to these students. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ FAST Program was created by the 88<sup>th</sup> Legislature as part of the overall funding for community colleges; it is one piece of the funding for the various performance measures</li> <li>○ Focused on dual credits for students as a funding resource for those students that are identified as “educationally disadvantaged” at no cost related to taking dual courses. The term is identified in statute based on a student that is eligible to participate in the FREE/Reduced Lunch Program prior to the four years that the student is taking dual credit courses.</li> <li>○ Use language from the FAST Website</li> <li>○ The FAST program is optional and not required since there is a financial component for the public IHE’s.</li> <li>○ Ideally after each semester, an IHE will receive funding. GAPP will be the portal where funds will be requested.</li> <li>○ <a href="#">FAST Program</a></li> </ul> </li> </ul>	
<b>Agenda Item 14. Discussion Topic: Proposed Rules for Transfer Grant Program</b>	<b>Charles Contero-Puls, Assistant Commissioner, THECB</b>
<b>Handout Provided: No</b>	<b>Formal Decision/Action Required</b> No
<p><b>Discussion Summary:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This topic will discuss the proposed rules for the Transfer Grant program that will be posted to the Texas Register. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The agency was provided authority to create the Transfer Grant through a Rider and not a statute</li> <li>○ Use funds available to create a Transfer Grant</li> <li>○ Using some of the aspects that were learned through the GEERO-funded Transfer Grant about the structure and the impact</li> <li>○ Will be posting the ruled during the 10/13 Texas Register to see the proposed rules that will go to the January 2024 Board meeting</li> <li>○ Will allow institutions to utilize the funding in spring 2024</li> <li>○ Was not given emergency rule-making authority</li> <li>○ The program is specifically for use at the 4-year public institutions and HRI’s to provide an opportunity for students that completed an AAS degree to help pay for a BA degree</li> <li>○ Standard eligibility requirement that are similar to other grant programs (mirror like TEXAS Grant) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➢ Requires SAP based on the institution’s policy</li> <li>➢ Unique requirement is full-time enrollment; completed an AA degree, and at least a 2.5 GPA and the AA degree includes the core curriculum.</li> <li>➢ Cannot have TEXAS Grant and Transfer Grant at the same time.</li> <li>➢ Does provide policy priority model: continuing students first, then the priority EFC (SAI) and lastly look at the highest levels of academic achievement</li> </ul> </li> <li>○ There will be a maximum grant amount; roughly in the TEXAS Grant target grant amount</li> <li>○ Allocation structure use the model of TEXAS Grant program; schools will get an allocation and award eligible students accordingly.</li> <li>○ Program will be under Chapter 22 which means that the 2024-2025 PPA will apply to the Transfer Grant</li> <li>○ Funds will be accessible within GAPP</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	
<b>Agenda Item 15. Feedback for Future Meetings</b>	<b>Melet Leafgreen, Chair</b>
<b>Handout Provided: No</b>	<b>Formal Decision/Action Required</b> No
<p><b>Discussion Summary:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Discussion about the 2024 FAAC Meetings</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <b>2024 FAAC Virtual meeting</b></li> <li>○ <b>Dec. 7, 2023</b></li> <li>○ <b>Mar. 7, 2024</b></li> <li>○ <b>June 6, 2024</b></li> <li>○ <b>Sept. 12, 2024</b></li> <li>○ <b>Dec. 5, 2024</b></li> </ul> </li> </ul>	
<b>Agenda Item 16. Adjournment</b>	<b>Melet Leafgreen, Chair</b>

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<b>Handout Provided: No</b>	<b>Formal Decision/Action Required</b> No
<b>Summary:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Rachele Motion to Adjourn and Scott Second</li><li>• Adjourned at 12:09 pm</li><li>• Agenda Topics and Ideas make sure to send them to Melet, Cecilia and Leah</li></ul>	
<b>Reminder. Announcement: Expense Reports</b>	<b>Melet Leafgreen, Chair</b>