

PUBLIC TESTIMONY Agenda Item: VIII-G(1) - Fundable Outcomes & Weights

Name: Chelsea Talley

Organization: TX Pace Student Advisory Council

For or Against or Neutral: Neutral

Oral/Written Testimony: Both

Respected Members of the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board,
My name is Chelsea Talley, and I'm a proud student at Tarrant County Community College, a member of the Student Advisory Council, and a mom of two daughters. I previously testified when House Bill 8 was still being considered by the legislature.

While I'm grateful for the positive impacts this legislation has already had for community college students like myself, I have some concerns regarding the proposed FY25 funding rules that I feel are important to address.

First, looking at the funding rates for 15 dual credit hours versus 15 transfer hours. In my view, these rates should be equal since they represent the same 15 credit hours earned. However, if the transfer rate ends up higher, I worry colleges might start encouraging students to wait and get those credits after high school graduation instead of through dual credit courses. That would limit access to an affordable head start that students like my daughters need.

My other major concern relates to how "economically disadvantaged" students are defined for weighted funding purposes. A recent survey of nearly 12,000 Texas community college students reveals how financially strained many of us truly are:

64% would have trouble getting \$500 for an emergency

49% are food insecure

50% face housing insecurity

26% wouldn't be able to get \$500 from any source

And we know from other analysis that a majority of the almost 500,000 community college students in Texas who received federal emergency aid were actually non-Pell students.

So by only counting Pell students as "economically disadvantaged", we'd be overlooking huge numbers of students living on the financial edge. I urge you to use a comprehensive definition that captures Pell-eligible, TEOG, and other equivalent students in need.

Colleges deserve additional funding for providing critical resources for these students to remain enrolled and successfully complete their degree or credential.

My own journey shows how transformative an education can be, but also how critical support systems are to make that possible for more students like me. We have an opportunity to create an inclusive system that helps families get ahead. With this funding model, let's shape that brighter future for all Texans.

Thank you for your consideration and commitment to students. I'm honored to lend my voice and experiences to this mission.

Sincerely, Chelsea Talley Aspiring First-Generation Graduate

Tarrant County Community College Student Advisory Council Member