

FINANCIAL AID ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board

COMMITTEE CHAIR	VICE CHAIR
<p>Ed Kerestly Director of Financial Aid Angelo State University Email: Ed.Kerestly@angelo.edu Term: 12/01/2018-10/31/2022 Ed Kerestly began working in financial aid in 1994. For the past three and a half years, he has served as the Director of Financial Aid at Angelo State University (TX). He has also led the financial aid offices at University of Texas Permian Basin (TX), Abilene Christian University (TX), Grand Valley State University (MI), Calvin University (MI) and Cornerstone University (MI), as well as worked in the areas of admissions and student life at Greenville University (IL). Over the years, Ed has served in various leadership roles in state, regional, and national financial aid organizations. As the father of three college age children—all attending Angelo State University—he knows firsthand the challenge of paying for college, the importance of financial aid, and the commitment needed to assure kids get a great college education.</p>	<p>Denise Welch Financial Aid Director, Panola College Email: dwelch@panola.edu Term: 12/01/2018-10/31/2023 Denise has served as Director of Financial Aid at Panola College for more than ten years. Denise has been the Financial Aid Director at Panola College since 2008 and has more than 24 years of financial aid experience. Over the years she served as chair for the training committee and has been involved in training new aid officers on state and regionals levels. She has served on several committees in TASFAA, SWASFAA and NASFAA. She is a SWASFAA Past President with prior service as the Texas Delegate on the Board of Directors, also serving TASFAA Board of Directors as Vice President and Representative at Large. She has been active with NASFAA in several different task forces. She also served on the 2017-2018 NASFAA Board of Directors as the Regional Representative. She is currently serving as Representative at Large on the NASFAA Board of Directors. She is in her third year as a member of the FAAC for the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board.</p>
PAST CHAIR	THECB REPRESENTATIVE
<p>Robert Merino Dean of Financial Aid San Jacinto Community College District Email: Robert.Merino@sjcd.edu Term: 11/01/2016 – 10/31/2021 With 25 years of financial aid experience, Robert has a comprehensive awareness of federal and state regulations. He has served as a board member of the Texas Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (TASFAA). He has participated in THECB negotiated rulemaking committees. He is currently serving as a Committee Chair for the Houston Hispanic Forum Career and Education Day.</p>	<p>Dr. Charles W. Contéro-Puls Deputy Assistant Commissioner Student Financial Aid Programs Email: Charles.Contero-Puls@HigherEd.Texas.gov 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>

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COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Dr. Ben Bholan

Principal – Arlington ISD
Email: BBholan1@aisd.net

Term: 11/01/2019 – 10/31/2022

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 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.

Boley, Johanna

Sr. Associate Vice Chancellor, Financial Aid – Lone Star College

Email: Johanna.M.Boley@lonestar.edu

Term: 11/01/2020 – 10/31/2023

Ms. Boley serves as Senior Associate Vice Chancellor Financial Aid for Lone Star College with a responsibility of administering \$260,000,000 in financial aid. Ms. Boley would provide a perspective from a large multi-campus community college that meets the financial needs of a diverse population.

Chen, Victoria

Director of Scholarships and Student Financial Aid – Texas Christian University

Email: V.Chen@tcu.edu

Term: 11/01/2020 – 10/31/2023

Dr. Chen has many years of experience as an aid administrator, at both public and private universities. She has extensive experience in managing state aid programs. During her career she has managed all state grant programs for TCU and served as loan coordinator for the College Access Loan.

Garrett, Rachele

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.

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<p>Gonzales, Dede Associate Director, Financial Aid and Scholarships Texas State University, San Marcos, Texas Email: dedegonzales@txstate.edu Term: 12/01/2020-10/31/2023 Ms. Gonzales has over 20 years of experience and expertise in financial aid administration, as well as knowledge of the four-year public university sector. Her experience in the administration of federal, state, and institutional financial aid programs as well as broad experience in student customer service, financial literacy and regulatory compliance operations makes her an ideal addition to the FAAC.</p>	<p>Granger, Heidi 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>
<p>Ingram, Bridgette Director, Student Financial Assistance Texas A&M University, College Station, Texas Email: BIngram99@tamu.edu Term: 12/01/2020-10/31/2023 Ms. Ingram has served in the financial aid industry for over 20 years, she has been with the financial aid office at Texas A&M for just over 16 years, prior to her service at Texas A&M she was a member of Blinn College financial aid team. Bridgette has served the Texas Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (TASFAA) as Chair of the Scholarship Committee and member of the fall conference committee; she also served the Southwest Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (SWASFAA) as chair of the membership committee. In addition, she has also served on a couple of task force for the Texas Veterans Commission as well. Bridgette has presented at state and national conference on financial aid and veterans benefit programs.</p>	<p>Nguyen, Tam 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>

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<p>Nolan, Holly Executive Director of Financial Aid University of Houston – Clear Lake Email: Nolan@UHCL.edu Term: 11/01/2020-10/31/2023 Ms. Nolan is extremely knowledgeable about financial aid opportunities for Texas students, and most importantly the eligibility and processes for applying for financial aid. Finally, Ms. Nolan has provided key insights and leadership while working effectively to utilize federal and state funding provided to students as we navigate the COVID-19 pandemic.</p>	<p>Norton, Shonna Director of Social & Emotional Services Wichita Falls ISD Email: snorton@wfishd.net Term: 03/01/2020-10/31/2023 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 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>Peterson, Steven Director of Financial Aid and Scholarships Blinn College Email: steven.peterson@blinn.edu Term: 11/01/2020-10/31/2023 Mr. Peterson has over 28 years working in financial aid and holding various positions at St. Edwards University where he gained experience working with Ellucian Banner and ARGOS. He has extensive experience in writing ARGOS reports for reporting and processing needs and ensuring the data he is pulling is accurate. His most recent experience has been at Blinn College on the Brenham campus. Mr. Peterson understands the short and long term impacts of regulations and financial aid.</p>	<p>Ratliff, Thomas 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>

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<p>Steelman, Kelly Director of Financial Aid Amarillo College Email: k0151162@actx.edu Term: 12/01/2018-10/31/2021 Kelly has been in the financial aid industry since beginning her career as a student in 2001 and has spent the last seven years as Director of Financial Aid at Amarillo College. AS the Director of Financial Aid, she oversees the application, verification and processing of federal financial aid, state aid and scholarships. As a first-generation college student herself, she works closely with other areas of the college to make the transition to college as easy as possible for incoming students.</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>Trejo, Arnold Executive Director of Financial Aid and Scholarships University of Texas at San Antonio Email: arnold.trejo@utsa.edu Term: 11/01/2020-10/31/2023 With over 30 years in the profession, Mr. Trejo has worked in various leadership positions supporting student access and success, advocating for meaning financial aid policies and practices that fuel positive changes within the profession. Mr. Trejo has worked at a flagship, several mid-sized HSI campuses, and has had several business ventures - all of which have given him the breadth and depth of experience necessary to successfully lead dynamic teams focused on securing financial resources for student success.</p>

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE

<p>Jase Kugiya University of Texas at Austin Email: jasekugiya@utexas.edu Term: 06/01/2020 – 05/31/2022</p> <p>Jase Kugiya was born and raised in Hawaii but has since experienced living in several states as well as extensive educational experience at several institutions during his postsecondary education. Mr. Kugiya is currently pursuing his Doctorate of Philosophy in Higher Educational Leadership at the University of Texas at Austin after receiving his Masters of Social Work from the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor. Mr. Kugiya received a Bachelor of Social Work with a minor in Sociology from Saint Martin's University in Lacey, WA.</p> <p>Mr. Kugiya is interested in researching the issues driving the increasing costs of higher education and whether the return on investment for students is justifiable. In his own words "this topic is especially pertinent as we get closer to 2030. In a sense, the goals and outcomes of 60x30TX are contingent on the accessibility and value of pursuing a postsecondary degree or credential for Texans."</p>
