

**LAR COMMENTS  
(Raymond Lewis)**

**Raymond Lewis, Chair of the Galveston College Board of Regents**

**I am here today in my capacity as Chair of the Community College Association of Texas Trustees**

- **CCATT is the only STATE association of elected officials in higher education; we advocate for community colleges and provide professional development to Texas trustees in order to foster student success AND better boardsmanship**
- **As you know, community college trustees are ALL locally elected**
- **Community college boards work collaboratively with our chief executive officers to fulfill the expectations of our communities and constituents by providing education and training opportunities that are affordable, accessible, and relevant to the economy of Texas for today...and tomorrow**
- **The Community College Trustee Association works in concert with the presidents & chancellors to advocate for our common legislative priorities as we approach the upcoming 85<sup>th</sup> session. The CCATT board adopted these priorities recently and before you today, CCATT and TACC stand united**

**Please allow me to reiterate a few examples of the state's community college successes mentioned by my colleagues:**

- **The 50 community college districts serve the state by enrolling 78% of freshmen and sophomores in Texas higher education.**

- The graduation success of community colleges helped the state in pursuit of the goals of Closing the Gaps
- Community Colleges will play a critical role in achieving the targets outlined in 60x30TX

As Dr. McKown noted, in fall of 2015, 66% of students enrolled in our colleges are from minority or underrepresented groups. We serve a diverse population.

▪ *Source:THECB*

The success of these students is critical to achieving the overarching goal of 60x30TX

According to the Texas Education Agency, more than 60% of the students in the K-12 pipeline are students from minority groups. Many of these students enter higher education through a community college

How will Texas succeed in achieving the goals of 60x30TX?

Students will need more affordable educational options.

Dr. Williams has shared with you that nearly 60% of the state's high school graduates are from low-income families. Unfortunately that number is growing.

Since 2000, the number of students completing credentials at Texas community colleges has increased by 177%, putting more Texans to work in good paying jobs and assisting students to earn advanced degrees.

**When looking at post-secondary educational opportunities, Community colleges are considerably more affordable than other higher education opportunities. Our graduates are completing with only half of the debt of their university peers.**

**For example, through the Universal Access Program at my institution, Galveston College provides free tuition for any eligible local high school graduate. Of course, students must be a resident of the taxing district for at least 12 months prior to enrolling and remain so throughout the enrollment and carry a minimum of 12 hours per semester and maintain at least a C average or above.**

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**Texas community colleges are working diligently to meet regional workforce needs and are looking ahead to help achieve the goals of 60x30TX. Students need to earn a credential faster and enter the workforce sooner.**

- The three week online “Maymesters” program at Coastal Bend College is another example of an innovative program intended to reduce the cost and time that it takes to earn a degree or certificate. The Accelerated Learning Academy complements the traditional sixteen-week semester. The program had an increase of 700% participation since 2012 with improved success. Enrolled students went from “C” averages to “B” average.**

**To meet regional and statewide workforce needs, Texas must fill job openings in Health Care, Information Technology, Skilled Trades, Business and Finance: Many (if not all) of these areas of education begin at a community college.**

- **Hill College is another example of a community college working to provide students affordable options despite the challenges of serving in a rural setting. Hill College partners with area business and industry to provide students with advanced diagnostic skills to service today's automobiles. The Snap-on Automotive Technology Program in Cleburne includes a new partnership with Fiat Chrysler. In addition to a guaranteed job in the automotive industry after completion, students also receive a 50% discount on tools to begin their new career.**

**~Our institutions statewide are continuing to provide innovative programs that align with the goals of 60x30TX.**

**In order to educate and train the quality workforce the state envisions (and requires) for the coming decade depends on the state's investment to our community colleges. As trustees, our most important role is assuring every tax payer's dollar is well spent and transparently accounted for...**

**According to the FY 2013 EMSI (Economic Modeling Specialists International) report**

- **Over the years, community college students have continued to make a positive impact after graduation-**
  - **93% of former community college students have stayed and work in Texas.**
- **Former community college students currently employed in Texas contribute \$52.7 billion in added state income to the state's economy, or 869,539 new jobs**
- **Student's higher lifetime earnings and increased outputs of business created a return on taxpayer's investment in the amount of \$15.6 billion**

- For every \$1 spent by taxpayers, \$6.20 was gained in added savings

As you know, Community colleges are funded with three primary revenue sources:

- State Appropriations
- Tuition and Fees *and*
- Local Property Taxes

As public servants, we as trustees must balance the need to keep tuition low, while also considering our fiduciary obligations to local taxpayers. A reduction in state funding would translate to an increase in tuition, or raising of local property taxes; neither of these options would be choices we would like to exercise. Therefore, the partnership with the state is critical to EACH OF OUR institutions

Galveston College is beginning to celebrate its 50<sup>th</sup> year. Our mission to serve the students of the local taxing district and service area by offering vocational, technical, and academic courses for certification or associate's degrees is as relevant TODAY as it was 50 years ago, when many of our colleges were founded. We ask today that the state to continue to invest in YOUR institutions. The state's investment translates into Texas success:

As I mentioned in my opening remarks, CCATT and TACC are united in support of our joint legislative priorities. Since March, when we last testified here, we decreased our general revenue request by \$113 million to reflect the economic slowdown in some sectors. Both CCATT and TACC recognize the 85<sup>th</sup> Legislature will face difficult decisions to balance the state's budget. We encourage all of you to keep in mind the Legislature's investment in community colleges translates into Texas success.

**But make no mistake about it...the state's community colleges need the full \$200 million.**

**I would be remiss if I did not mention that two of Texas colleges have made the finalist list of ten to receive the prestigious Aspen Prize for Community College Excellence. Odessa College, headed by fellow panel member Dr. Williams, and San Jacinto College, headed by Dr. Brenda Hellyer. From the more than 1,200 community colleges nationwide, the list is culled to 150. And from that list emerges the ten finalists. This is a huge deal for these two institutions and the State of Texas. There is a monetary award and the finalist will be chosen in March of 2017.**

**In closing, the state's community colleges will play a vital role in the success of the 60x30TX plan. The legislature's investment in community colleges is essential to achieving these goals:**

- The state's investment ensures our colleges will continue to create stronger communities and healthier local economies by preparing a workforce that sustains Texas business and industry.**
- The investment in our institutions ensures educational opportunities remain affordable as most of our students remain in Texas to raise families and contribute to the state's continued economic prosperity**

**I would now like to introduce the CEO/President of our partner organization, the Texas Association of Community Colleges, Jacob Fraire**