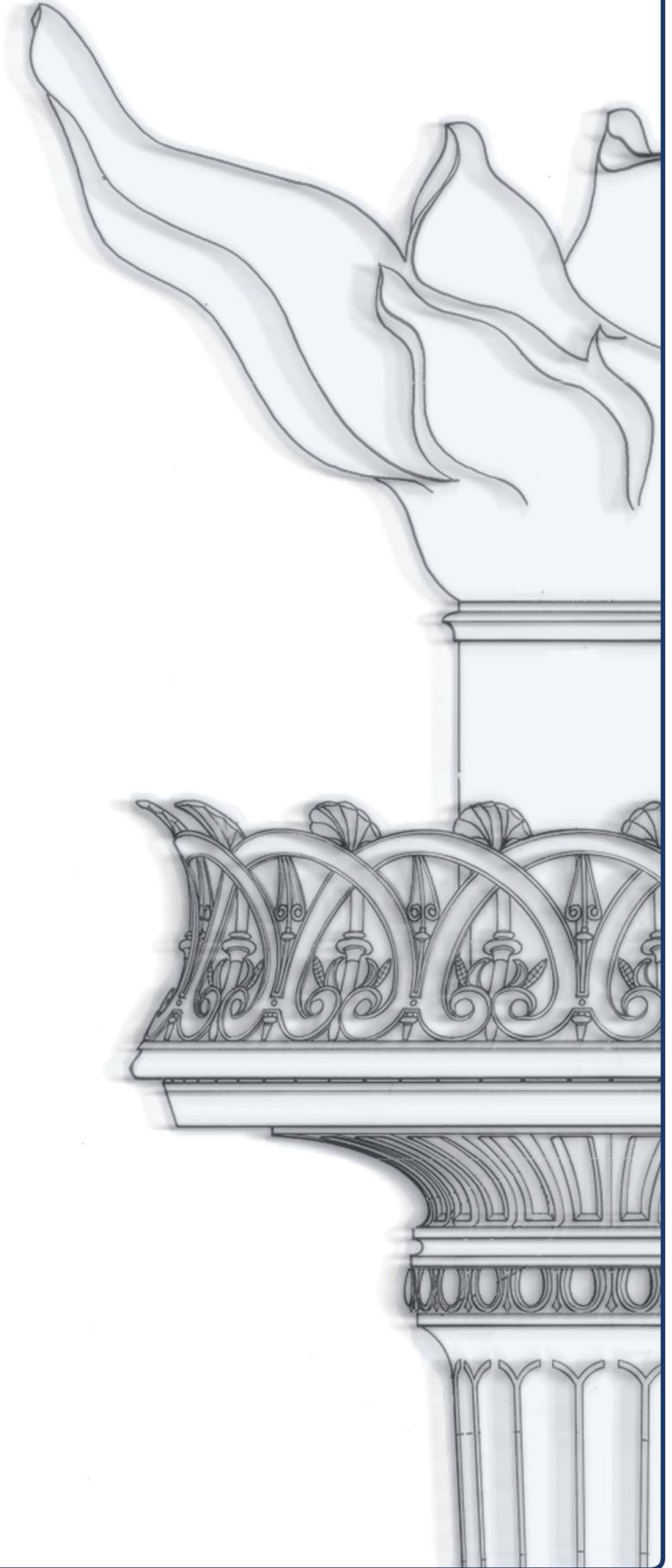


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Texas Association of College Teachers
Defending Academic Freedom
Volume LXX Number 2



Quarterly eBulletin

October/November/December 2016

The TACT Quarterly eBulletin

October/November/December 2016 - Volume LXX Number 2

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Texas Association of College Teachers
5750 Balcones Dr., Suite 201 Austin, Texas 78731

tact@bizaustin.rr.com

[p] (512) 873-7404

[f] (512) 873-7423



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Executive Director's Report

by **Chuck Hempstead**
TACT Executive Director

In my annual dues renewal letter several weeks ago, I wrote that in my 22 years of representing TACT members at the Legislature, I don't remember a previous interim when I was so concerned for faculty issues as we approach a legislative session.

Yes, last session was a good one for higher education, including tuition revenue bonds and appropriations increases which have facilitated our annual goal of narrowing the gap of average Texas salaries compared with the other top ten most populous states. And yes, af-

able to amend the bill to permit faculty some say about guns in their offices, at least on the campuses which chose to exercise that opportunity.

But the deep pockets we enjoyed last session are empty. The Legislative Budget Board (Gov., Lite Gov. and Speaker) have asked agencies to prepare for ten percent



reductions in their appropriations requests. The news and conversations during interim hearings are full of eliminating tuition set-asides, retracting the authority of regents to set tuition, (some) bachelor's degrees bestowed by community colleges, fully funding the Teacher Retirement System and eliminating tenure (or at least no more research about Shakespeare's love life). Not hearing about anyone fil-

ter years of TACT being a leader in blocking guns on campus, we were

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5750 Balcones Dr.,
Suite 201

Austin, TX 78731

office@tact.org

[p] (512) 419-9275

[f] (512) 873-7423



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Executive Director's Report (continued)

ing a bill to limit the unfunded mandate of the Legacy component of Hazlewood or any funding necessary to promote 60 percent of our young people having a degree or credential by the year 2030.

Elsewhere in this newsletter you will find the Legislative Agenda which your TACT leadership recently distributed in person to the



top thought leaders in the Capitol. And for those of you who participated in our summer faculty issues survey, we distributed your opinions, too. As you know about legislative influence, the more people we represent, the more important is our voice. You might want to share this issue of the newsletter with your colleague who wants to be part of the solution. 

The TACT Legislative Bill Tracker

The 2017 Legislative Session is right around the corner and TACT has compiled a list of bills we're keeping an eye on.

CLICK HERE

to access the current TACT

Legislative Bill Tracker.

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Faculty Senates

by Gaines West, Attorney-at-Law
West, Webb, Allbritton & Gentry

One of the surprising truths I have learned from representing faculty over the last three decades is that there is no one organization on any campus, or at any university, that has a greater opportunity to positively impact the working traditions/conditions/culture for the faculty than a Faculty Senate - and uniformly my experience is that every Faculty Senate wholly fails to achieve any positive result for faculty. This {the model for the Faculty Senate} is as close to a union representative for the "working class" {sorry, I know professors can hardly be so analogized} as you will find in Higher Education - yet for most no explanation seems to provide the reasons that across the board Faculty Senates fail at their mission: positive change for faculty.

I have come to find out the reason so much is done by so many with so few results. When I tell you my conclusion it will likely resonate

somewhere deep in your experience in Academia. After all, remember, it is IN Academia that the whole idea of collegial interactions are forwarded with much gusto!

The truth is that it is in the highest administrative ranks of these Faculty Senate organizations that university administrations go to "pluck" that next Dean {or Associate Dean} of Faculties, Associate or Assistant Provost, VP, or Associate or Assistant Vice Chancellor. You see, university administrative types implicitly "advertise" to the highest ranks of the Faculty Senate that in effect "choice administrative positions," not to mention higher salaries, await those who have demonstrated their skills in dealing with difficult faculty and difficult faculty issues. A true award of a prized position waits that faculty member, who leads the Faculty Senate, and who quells administrative rebellion, or any kind of insurrection that might ultimately embarrass the university administration. See what I mean? It's a built in way to be sure that nothing and no one gets too out of control. But those dedicated to the Faculty

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5750 Balcones Dr.,
Suite 201

Austin, TX 78731

office@tact.org

[p] (512) 419-9275

[f] (512) 873-7423



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Faculty Senates (continued)

Senate process endlessly strive to effect change for the good of all, while all the while awarding these plumb appointments by the university administration guarantees that ONLY the process will endure - with no concomitant change.

You might conclude I am just cynical and that I am missing the point. Truth is I am pragmatic and a realist who has witnessed lots of disputes at many universities {both private and public} and the one constant is the story I have just told. Faculty Senates have great potential to make change happen. Few have ever achieved any such goal.

So what is the take away? Commit to working through processes to effectuate change at your university. When you get good at it, and know how to communicate well across the administrative spectrum, and get fellow faculty working towards real change - RESIST the offer to become Dean of Faculties for a really good percentage increase on top of your present salary. Be different and don't get bought off by the administration. Consider

what may be truly important: self-aggrandizement, personal gain, or change and progress? I'm not saying which is the right path for you, but know that many have gone before you and are now successful Provosts, even Presidents. Wonder if they remember the change they were working towards? 

The information in this column is intended to provide a general understanding of the law, not as legal advice. Readers with legal problems, including those whose questions may be addressed here, should consult attorneys for advice on their particular circumstances.

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Suite 201

Austin, TX 78731

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Active Shooter Training

by Professor Jonathan Coopersmith

Department of History, Texas A&M University

What do you do if a gunman (yes, this is a primarily male issue) enters your building? To give faculty a sense of their options, the Texas A&M chapters of the TACT and the AAUP invited our University Police Department to conduct an active shooter training on November 15. Over 20 professors learned the worst reaction was to freeze and do nothing.

The odds are extremely good nothing like this will ever happen. But if it does, you should know in advance what you can do. Your options in descending order are flight, hide, and fight. As a teacher, your students will automatically view you as a leader. If you move, they will follow. By acting promptly you may save your life and theirs.

Fleeing away from the gunman is the wisest course. If that is not possible, hide in a room with a door you lock or barricade. If a gunman

actually enters your room, fight by throwing anything available at him, yelling, and otherwise trying to overwhelm him.



This undated image provided Aug. 1, 2012, by the City of Houston shows a scene from a video the city of Houston made to teach people how to react in the case of an active shooting situation using a short, three-word mantra. Run, hide, fight. The short, 5 minute 55 second clip was released by the city days after an attack in an Aurora, Colo., movie theater killed 12 people. (AP Photo/The City of Houston)

I strongly urge TACT chapters to organize a meeting with your police department to show faculty how to react to an active shooter. Other sessions that may benefit our colleagues are bystander intervention and suicide awareness training. These events will not make you a trained counselor, but they can make you more aware of your environment and how to react quickly

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5750 Balcones Dr.,
Suite 201

Austin, TX 78731

office@tact.org

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[f] (512) 873-7423



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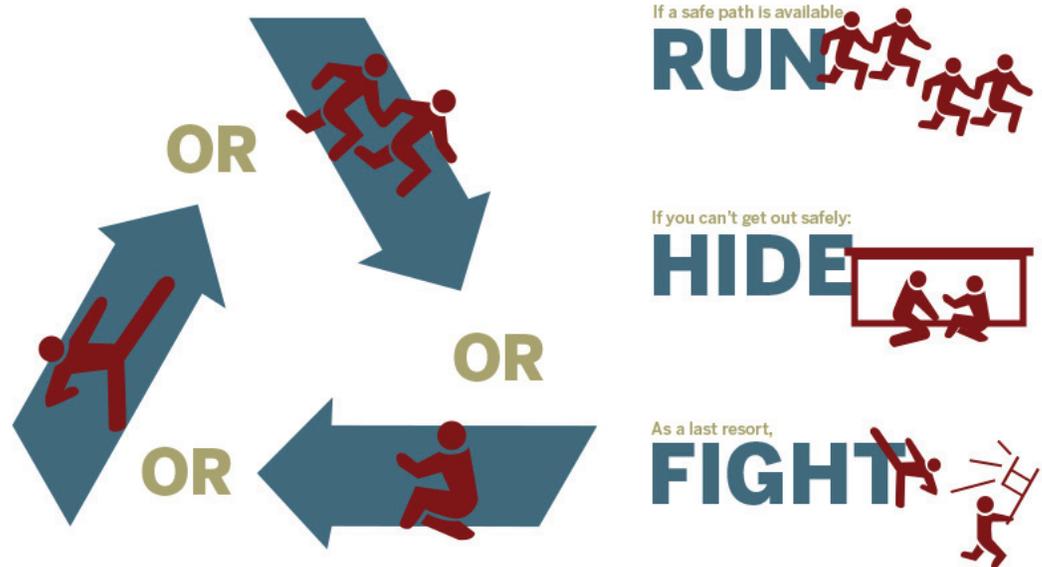
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Active Shooter Training (continued)

and thoughtfully when seconds literally could be the difference between life and death.

For more information, Ready Houston has an excellent video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5VcSwejU2D0>



One final takeaway: If you have to evacuate because of a bomb threat, take the time to grab your purse, cellphone, backpack, or other belongings because you may not be allowed back into the building for a while. If there is an active shooter, forget your belongings and act immediately. 🗺️

Homeland Security has a card with the essentials:

https://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/active_shooter_pocket_card_508.pdf

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TACT Officer Nominations

Now's the time to take your commitment in higher education to the next level. Since 1948, the Texas Association of College Teachers has provided services and advocacy on behalf of faculty, staff, and librarians in Texas public colleges and universities. We need your continued support to maintain and grow our association in Texas. Let your voice be heard. TACT is now accepting nominations for candidates to serve as members of the TACT Board of Directors in the following roles:

- **Vice President of Financial Affairs:**

During a two year term, the Vice President of Financial Affairs shall be responsible for safekeeping of the Association's funds, authorizing expenditures, making financial reports annually and at such other times as the State Board may request; and ensure proper auditing of the Association's books. The manner of carrying out the functions of the office is subject to the approval of the State Board as stated in Article VI of the TACT Bylaws.

- **Vice President of Legislative Affairs:**

During a two year term, The Vice President of Legislative Affairs is the Chair of the Legislative Committee. This committee will have the responsibility of disseminating information to association members and of maintaining communication with members of the Legislature from their home districts.

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Suite 201

Austin, TX 78731
office@tact.org

[p] (512) 419-9275

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The State Board shall take office on June 1 following the election in February. For more information on the duties and rolls of these positions, please go to <http://tact.org/content/bylaws>.



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Please include all of the following information with your submission to complete your nomination:

- name and contact information
- current resume
- letter of intent and/or statements from the nominee outlining the reasons for wanting to serve and outlining what he or she can contribute to the Texas Association of College Teachers

If you have any questions, please call the TACT office at 512.419.9275.

Nominations for consideration may be submitted electronically to office@tact.org and received by the close of business on January 14, 2017.

Thank you for your interest in growing in service to your profession in this very important way.



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60x30TX

By 2030, at least 60 percent of Texans ages 25-34 will have a certificate or degree.

Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board

The 60x30TX ("60 by 30 Tex") higher education strategic plan contains four broad goals. Each goal contains a set of targets that will move the state toward reaching one or more goals. Many stakeholders across Texas will need to develop and implement a wide range of strategies to meet each target.

1. By 2030, at least 60 percent of Texans ages 25-34 will have a certificate or degree.

- The first goal in the plan, the 60x30 goal, aims to increase the percentage of 25- to 34-year-olds in Texas who hold a certificate or degree.
- The 60x30 goal also uses 25- to 34-year-olds as a yardstick to answer the question: How prepared is Texas for the future? Through the focused efforts of industry, government, community organizations, K-12, and institutions of higher education, the state can respond positively to this question and achieve this goal.

2. By 2030, at least 550,000 students in that year will complete a certificate, associate, bachelor's, or master's from an institution of higher education in Texas.

- The completion goal complements the 60x30 goal by supplying graduates of all ages from all two- and four-year institutions of higher education in Texas.
- Growth in certificates and degrees among two- and four-year colleges is critical for reaching the 60x30 goal's 60 percent and educating a skilled workforce, but it is only part of the solution for reaching that goal.

3. By 2030, all graduates from Texas public institutions of higher education will have completed programs with identified marketable skills.

- Students need to be aware of the marketable skills embedded in

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5750 Balcones Dr.,
Suite 201

Austin, TX 78731
office@tact.org

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their academic programs, and institutions must make certain that students graduate with marketable skills.

- This goal charges two- and four-year public institutions in Texas with documenting, updating, and communicating the skills students acquire in their programs. (Private institutions of higher education in Texas may opt to participate in this goal.)

4. By 2030, undergraduate student loan debt will not exceed 60 percent of first-year wages for graduates of Texas public institutions.

- This goal challenges stakeholders to balance the levels of student loan debt with a graduate's earning potential the first year after college.
- If graduates are to contribute to the state's revenue and have the means to pursue personal goals, they must also complete their programs with no debt or with manageable debt, relative to their starting wage after college.

Latitude in Pursuing the Goals

Although the 60x30TX Plan focuses on higher education in Texas and its relationship to the workforce, one size does not fit every institution of higher education in the state. The plan provides latitude for two- and four-year institutions and encourages local creativity in pursuing the 60x30TX goals as institutions pursue their own distinct missions.

The 60x30TX Plan addresses students' desires for a better life, employers' desires to remain competitive, and the state's need for a robust economy. This plan also strengthens the excellence and quality in Texas higher education by challenging the state's two- and four-year institutions to prepare students for the jobs of the future, while also inspiring them to contribute to a greater Texas society. The 60x30TX Plan sets goals for Texas higher education that cannot be postponed without postponing the progress of Texas. 

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Suite 201

Austin, TX 78731

office@tact.org

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[f] (512) 873-7423



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1. Higher Education Funding: The top concern among our recent faculty issues survey, TACT supports reinstating appropriations investments, primarily in the following areas:

- A. Fully fund the anticipated cost to universities of the Hazlewood Act Legacy Program.
- B. Increase current funding levels of the TEXAS Grant scholarship program to account for previous cuts, increased tuition, growing enrollments and a higher percentage of students requiring financial aid.
- C. Maintain the "local control" of regents setting tuition rates.
- D. Provide sufficient resources and legislative intent that universities must address the salary compression and inversion issues created by hiring new faculty at higher salaries than existing faculty.

2. Public Education Funding: Provide sufficient funding to public education to replace "Robin Hood" and assure student preparedness for higher education, including monitoring the quality of dual credit coursework.

3. 60x30TX: TACT supports the goals of the state higher ed strategic plan to prepare the next generation of 21st Century Texas workforce and engaged citizenry.

4. Handguns on Campuses: TACT still opposes allowing individuals to carry concealed handguns on college campuses and encourages educational programming to minimize the resulting increase in gun accidents and incidents resulting from increased access.

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Austin, TX 78731
office@tact.org
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[f] (512) 873-7423



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The James M. Puckett, Ph. D. Government Relations Fund

For over 70 years, TACT has been on the front lines of higher education issues in Texas. The GRF assists TACT with a key component of our mission, **communicating TACT's legislative agenda** in order to improve Texas higher education.

Your voluntary contribution to the GRF allows TACT to present its members' agenda to key lawmakers and legislative committees. The GRF is never used for candidate contributions, only for activities that increase awareness of issues concerning faculty statewide. All expenditures are approved in advance by TACT's President, President-Elect and Legislative Committee Chair.

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Thank you to the 2016-2017 contributors

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Suite 201

Austin, TX 78731
office@tact.org

[p] (512) 419-9275
[f] (512) 873-7423



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TACT Membership and EPLI: Renew Today!

In the current climate of uncertainty in Texas' system of higher education, it's important to have strong advocates. Since 1948, the Texas Association of College Teachers has served university professors in the areas of academic freedom, statistical research, tenure implementation and protection, professional standards, and working conditions. We invite you to take a key career step by [becoming a member of TACT today](#) for \$158 (which includes professional liability insurance).

Your membership in TACT lets your voice be heard beyond your classroom and campus. We vigilantly monitor all agencies that affect faculty members to ensure your interests are represented. Our First Alert emails and quarterly eBulletins provide you with current developments on educational public policy issues, and we are always soliciting articles from you, our members. We also maintain a regular presence at the Capitol, where we lobby policymakers on your top concerns.

All TACT memberships include Educators Professional Liability Insurance (EPLI). EPLI provides up to \$2 million in coverage, plus legal fees for damages. EPLI is an important benefit for our members that has proven invaluable over the years.

Sign up or renew your TACT membership today!

Visit "[Join TACT](#)"

or renew over the phone by calling (512) 419-9275.



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Suite 201

Austin, TX 78731

office@tact.org

[p] (512) 419-9275

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