



MINUTES

The Conference Subcommittee meeting started at 3:00 pm on Feb. 26, 2021, beginning soon after 3:00pm.

Special Guest: Dr. Stacey Silverman, Assistant Commissioner of Academic and Health Affairs, Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB), since January 2020, who was very generous with her time and happy to meet with us.

TASA Board members present: Elaine Pawlowicz (President, UNT), Linda Fawcett (Staff: Executive Assistant/Registrar), Todd Lucas (Texas A&M, Kingsville), Joshua Rose (President-Elect, Dallas C/ Brookhaven), Luis Corpus (South TX C), Dan Sorensen (Odessa C), Alexandra Canchola (Texas A&M, Corpus Christi), Isadora Stowe (El Paso CC), Lisa Ehrich (Dallas C/ Brookhaven), Jason Bly (Midwestern State U), Felice House (Texas A&M, College Station), Karmien Bowman (Tarrant CC-NE), and Nancy Miller (Staff: Webmaster; TAMUCC).

Other representatives of current TASA member schools: Corey Ackelmire and Dr. Colleen Reilly (Houston CC), Mark Greenwalt (College of the Mainland), Zoe Spiliotis, Sarelah Aguilar and Brack Morrow (El Paso CC), Barry Phillips and Steve Goff (Odessa C), Mari Omori (Lone Star C – Kingwood), Ronelle Howard (Lubbock Christian Univ), Amy Gilley (?), Lawrence Jennings (San Antonio C), Chris Stanley and Mario Kiran (Univ. of TX of the Permian Basin), Janae Corrado (Tarrant CC/ Trinity River), Denise Baxter and Binod Shrestha (UNT), Chris Adams (South Plains C), Louis Katz (Texas A&M, Corpus Christi), Katherine Fields (?), Molly Arc (Brazosport C), Greg Elliott (Univ. of TX at San Antonio), Vicky Johnson and Chris Ireland (Tarleton State U), Carol Fairlie (Sul Ross State U), Natalie Macellaio and David Newman (Dallas Coll-Brookhaven), Tore Torrasi (Univ. of TX at Arlington), Steve Hilton (Midwestern State U), Jennifer Rose (Dallas College – Richland), Omar Hernandez (Dallas College – El Centro), Melinda McVay (?), Sue Anne Rische (Collin C) and Rachel Bower (Northwest Vista C).

The Meeting begins:

Elaine introduced **Dr. Silverman** and reminded everyone of the Zoom Chatroom for live commenting and asking questions.

Mark Greenwalt (COM) gave a brief history of the current situation, i.e. that in 2014 studio art courses were suddenly stripped from the THECB Transfer Core, because new guidelines required to prove such classes were only 50% skill-based. Two-year schools had to reapply to have their studio art classes re-instated. Using the new guidelines, Amarillo College and South Texas College did get some art courses returned to the Core, but when (with the help of TASA networking) other schools used their syllabi, they found out from the THECB that the

acceptances had been an error (!) A stalemate ensued, making it very difficult for art courses from two-year schools to automatically transfer to 4-year schools. It seemed that the THECB had become hostile to the applied fine arts for the Transfer core.

Dr. Silverman:

In October 2020 the THECB gained a new Commissioner, **Dr. Harrison Keller** (bringing both institutional and political experience from UT Austin and the Texas Legislature), who understands the fine arts better than his predecessor. That said: The THECB had indeed whittled down the Transfer Core to 42 hours in 2014, but now admits it doesn't have the resources to keep up with individual courses. Therefore, it is now willing to trust individual institutions to use their own formal processes (keeping SACS guidelines in mind) to approve Core courses. The 50% rule regarding "skills" is no longer a thing, but Core courses must satisfy the core competencies, i.e., critical thinking (which includes creative thinking), teamwork, social responsibility, and communication skills (including visual communication). Dr Silverman continued that in her opinion studio courses can be accepted if all elements are in place. "What helps to serve the student is ultimately what the THECB wants."

Lisa Ehrich asked: Which studio classes did HCCS have approved and how do we proceed?

Corey Ackelmire (HCCS) answered: Art 1311, 1312 (Design I and II), Art 1316 (Drawing I), and Art 2348 (Digital Art). Each institution has someone responsible for updating Core courses using a THECB "portal," and although theoretically, annual changes can be submitted at any time, **right now is the best time (late January/February) because of catalog deadlines.** [Dr. Silverman concurred.]

NOTE: the syllabi for Art 1311, 1312, 1316 and 2348 as approved by the THECB can now be downloaded from the TASA website at: <https://www.tasart.org/theCb>

Greg Elliott (UTSA) asked: Can Core courses come in at the 3000 level? Any prohibition against upper-level art courses in the Core? If so, will this shift?

Dr Silverman: At the present time, only lower division courses are allowed in the Core. It possibly could shift in the future but it is up to the Texas Legislature to decide because state funding for core courses would be affected.

She added: **It is BEST to use TCCNS (Texas Common Course Numbering System) course numbers.**

Lisa Ehrich asked: What about the Fine Arts FOS that was recently approved by the THECB in 2019 but then placed on hold this past summer with no formal explanation?

Dr. Silverman began by mentioning Texas SB25 (TX Senate bill 25) passed by the last Session in June 2019 – a transfer bill relating to measures to facilitate the transfer, academic progress, and timely graduation of students in public higher education.

Dr. Keller had important meetings to work out new programs but then COVID hit. Those at the meetings included Ray Martinez, Dr. Silverman, Annie Jones, and others with an equal number

of faculty and institutional representatives (Chaired by James Hallmark (Texas A&M) and ?, that met weekly from mid-March to October 2020. They initially looked at selected other state transfer programs (TN, NYC, CA, WASH, GA). Subsequently they came to realize how important was the Texas Common Core and Texas Common Core Numbering System (TCCNS).

The goal was restructuring the FOS programs into what is called the **Texas Transfer Framework (TTF)**, formed by a **TTAC (Texas Transfer Advisory Committee)** that according to Dr. Silverman **would currently welcome more faculty participants**. [Note: **Mario Kiran** (UTPB) cited two members of the TTAC: Elizabeth Mayer from the UT system (now a policy director), and Serenity King, UTD).]

Dr. Silverman admitted that not all programs will fit well into the new TTF for the FOS (she cited Music as one example) but that is OK. Discipline-specific accommodations can be worked out. She also referenced a few what she called “unicorns” out there – four-year “boutique” programs that could essentially opt out of any new Transfer agreements established by TTAC. BUT she followed with: “to be clear such exceptions should remain rare.”

IMPORTANT: Dr. Silverman added there will soon appear changes on the THECB website about the new framework as well as other changes to try to make it more user-friendly. Please consult it often.

Luis Corpus (STC) asked again if there is any active FOS for the Fine Arts?

Dr. Silverman said that the “suspended version” was something for the new TTAC to work on, **and they will probably do it first**. She added that the current THECB Commissioner “works fast.” A goal is to overall have 60 hours transferable from community colleges.

Mark Greenwalt (COM) asked: So, is the 50% skills-based limit still in place?

Dr. Silverman: It should now be up to the institution to certify that a course is core-worthy [because theoretically SACS would agree). **Todd Lucas (TAMUK)** retorted that he knows SACS and they tend to not like skills-based in the core. Then **Greg Elliott (UTSA)** added that SACS and NASAD seldom agree with one another.

Josh Rose (Brookhaven C) said that he sees a disconnect between what Dr. Silverman is saying (about faculty driven creation of core course) and what their institutions are telling them.

Dr. Silverman replied “that is a good question.” The THECB is creating a video about the FOS process and webinars on all the THECB processes. She again brought up the THECB website, that there is a new Director (Webmaster?) who is revamping the website to be more reader-friendly and to be always updating/ be a “living instrument” based on continuing feedback.

Todd Lucas (TAMUK) asked, as well as Jason Bly (MSU): Will the new TTAC subcommittees be chosen the same way as before (meaning how the prior FOS Fine Arts subcommittee was chosen, i.e. faculty members nominated by institutional deans/administrators)?

Dr. Silverman: At this point, yes. And more faculty participants would be welcomed. But she added that there has to be a balanced mix between 2-year and 4-year schools, small and large schools, and that nominees should be knowledgeable about transfer.

Steve Hilton (MSU) asked if there was still time when the THECB portal would still be open for universities to submit courses to the Core?

Dr. Silverman: yes, the portal will remain open until sometime in August or September.

Steve Hilton also asked that shouldn't TASA be the conduit between member schools and THECB (aka Dr. Silverman)? **Lisa Ehrich (Brookhaven):** how should we keep up with developments?

Dr. Silverman: yes to TASA's involvement, also consult the THECB website and invite me to your ZOOM meetings.

NOTE: Additional questions for Dr. Silverman can be routed to her via TASA. She is interested in improving communications and increasing faculty/ Institutional participation to work out ongoing transfer and curriculum issues.

Mark Greenwalt (COM): Should we wait on the FOS or continue to work on articulation agreements?

Dr. Silverman: whatever enhances transfer. [Mark concluded that meanwhile we should continue to honor/develop transfer agreements (articulation agreements) between colleges and universities.] Dr. Silverman added that the TTF should be active by April/May 2020 and they plan to work quickly with a Fall implementation (seems overly optimistic to most of us...).

Louis Katz (TAMUCC) asked "Where can we get the current version of the Fine Arts FOS?"

Dr. Silverman: I will give a copy to Elaine to share with TASA members. [Again: the link to the downloadable syllabi on the TASA website: <https://www.tasart.org/thecb>]

Todd Lucas (TAMUK): Once the FOS is established, can we review/make changes to it more quickly than waiting five years?

Dr. Silverman: Yes, if needed.

Mark Greenwalt (COM) stated that for creation of courses the community colleges are limited to the AGCM (Academic Course Guide Manual) but the four-year schools are not. He then asked: can we (2-year schools) just add to the ACGM description, or change it?

Dr. Silverman: I will have to check into that. She added that right now **Houston CC can be used as a template** for how to proceed institutionally. She then added: Art will likely not fit neatly in the new transfer framework, but the framework can adapt in response.

Mark's synopsis of the above exchange: Hopefully TASA will be facilitating increased engagement with 4-year institutions regarding future modification to ACGM.

Mark also added: For transfer to work efficiently, 4-year schools must take on the leadership role of involvement with ACGM studio course designs so that foundational studio courses at 2-year schools can keep pace with evolving 4-programs.

Also discussed by TASA members: The 4-year schools in attendance continue to assert that transferring art students should not be core-complete since it proves unwise to attempt more than 3 studio art courses per semester in their junior and senior years. (This is something TASA has been hearing about for many years.)

Carol Fairlie (SRSU) asked if the BFA will be recognized as a professional degree and therefore require/need more hours to complete?

Dr. Silverman: I agree that there may have to be (and should be) a separate FOS for the BFA.

Dr. Silverman also brought up the fact that students have to file degree plans early (native students at **30 credit hours** (prior: 45 hours), and that incoming dual-credit students have to do so at 15 credit hours (!) The degree plan declares the path they are on (that can be problematic for them, especially if they later find that they chose the wrong path). Full-time non-degree students are frowned upon.

Josh Rose (Brookhaven) added that **Dual-credit students are getting younger and younger (!), and not mature enough to make life career choices so early.**

Dr. Silverman: They still have to declare a path anyway (at 15 hours). Since there are not that many dual-credit art programs out there, unfortunately some students who actually would have wanted a career in art would be pushed to declare something else (and be locked in to that dual-credit program) before they could have even tried art classes. (Editor's note: Sounds like something that TAEA should discuss as well as TASA).

ANNOUNCEMENTS

THE FIRST ANNUAL JURIED ONLINE STATEWIDE TASA STUDENT EXHIBITION IS HERE!

Deadline for entries is April 1 (2-year, 4-year undergrad, grad students and CE art students are all eligible). Cash prizes! Free to enter. **See the TASA website on how to enter:** <https://www.tasart.org/artovation-student-show> and REMEMBER: you must also join TASA to finish your entry (it's free!), please do so before you submit your entry or concurrently, at <https://www.tasart.org/join>.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 4:30 pm.

SUBMITTED BY: **Linda Fawcett**