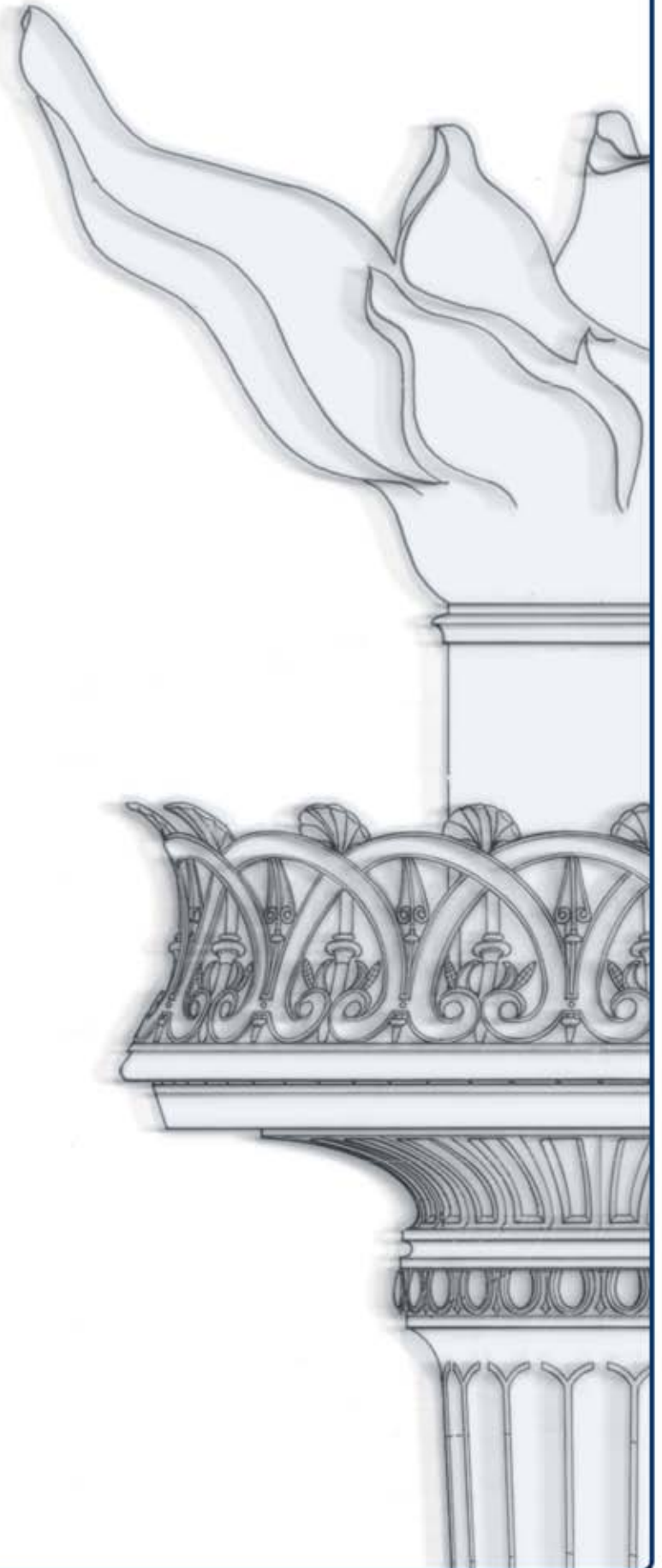


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Texas Association of College Teachers
Defending Academic Freedom
Volume LXIX Number 3

Quarterly eBulletin

January/February/March 2016



The TACT Quarterly eBulletin

January/February/March 2016 - Volume LXIX Number 3

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Executive Director's Report

by **Chuck Hempstead**
TACT Executive Director

Beyond Guns on Campus

Just back from the first interim hearing of the Texas House Committee on Higher Education – coincidentally during the first week that most Texas colleges are back in session. And the same month that Texas forefather Jim Bowie is temporarily the second most famous person with that last name.

Higher Ed Commissioner Raymund Paredes spoke to the new 15-year strategic plan, 60 X 30, and more than talking about quality (the TACT mantra), warned the lawmakers to avoid mediocrity. He expressed concern about student debt, but was equally concerned about students who avoided higher ed in order to avoid debt. The new strategic plan again calls for a significant increase in post high school education, because two-thirds of the future workforce will need more formal education than a diploma. You will begin to see even more reliance on philanthropy and public/private partnerships to fund public higher ed, because state appropriations isn't beginning to keep up.

The second issue required input from the Commissioner and each of the system chancellors; news you've been seeing about the "University of Texas at Houston" (that's a joke) and other appearances of working around the Coordinating Board. Much of it has to do with private sector and philanthropic requirements and real estate issues, and there was clear understanding from Committee Chairman Zerwas that Systems are enterprises ever-less funded by the state that are out looking for new partners.

The hearing was the perfect venue for whoa-is-us reports: faculty salaries are \$20,000 less than peer institutions; broom closets are converted into labs, the major Texas flagship institution is ranked 52nd nationally.

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Most of the rest of this issue is devoted to "After the Fact" of SB 11. Your humble Executive Director parading down Congress Avenue with Texas Conference/American Association of University Professors Board Member (and TACT member) Jim Klein, who drove in from Corpus Christi just for this. The Modern Language Association holding its national convention in Austin and protesting the law, the fact that no private university in the state has opted to permit guns on campus, TACT board members sharing their reactions, etc. We'll still be complaining about it during our legislative visits March 4 if you can join us. This, too, two days after MLK day, "We Shall Overcome." 



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Past President's Message

by Peter J. Hugill
TACT Past-President

Guns, on Campus and Elsewhere in American Society

Americans are obsessed with guns. And they seem to conflate handguns with hunting guns. Its not, from an academic perspective, quite clear why, although plenty of us say its because of the Second Amendment. Hunting makes sense, especially if you wanted to eat on the American frontier. And if you like to eat deer now (I sure as heck do—and moose when I lived in Canada). But us social scientists say “hmmm” when the justification shifts to handguns. But let’s remember, as written the good ole Second says that the whole point is to have a “well-regulated militia.” Well, good idea, if you are resisting an invading tyrant and hate the idea of a standing army, both of which ideas properly drove our founding fathers. So who is going to invade us now? A Canada from which Britain is long gone? A Mexico long abandoned by a bankrupt Spain? And, pardon me, but we seem to have a pretty well-behaved standing army under civilian control, the lack of which is what quite correctly worried the ffs.



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Ok, so the Supreme Court, in a decision second only in weirdness to Dredd Scott, threw out the original intent of the writers and framers and expanded Second Amendment



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Past President's Message (cont)

rights to anyone who wants to own a gun. Hmmm. Many of whom are strict originalists on the Constitution, as are several Supremes who voted for it. Double “hmmm” says the social scientist in me.

Ah well, no-one says cultures have to be logical. Or sensible.

So we need guns for protection (so say the Second Amendment supporters). Wow, good point. All those crazed gun-armed thugs threatening us at all hours of the day or night. Actually, no. Most gun deaths are older white males committing suicide, threatening only themselves. Probably OK—its an efficient way to leave “this vale of tears,” as one of my old DH's had it, and, no Catholic I, I don't count suicide a sin. Most American murderers use guns. No need to be an imaginative killer if you have a Glock handy. Makes it easy. But then again, most murderers are relatives, known to their victims, usually enraged spouses (male, not female btw—probably a good argument for arming females!). And in any case American murder rates have been dropping steadily for the past twenty years or so—the social scientists will tell you its because the age structure of our society is shifting—not so many males aged 15-24 and its they who commit most murders.

And then of course, we clearly need armed students on campus don't we. So many murderous 15-24 year olds! So many violent murders there, aren't there? The Texas “Campus Protection Act” (apparently sponsored by George Orwell) was something desperately needed to make sure no more students die on Texas campuses. Wow, totally great idea all you guys (mostly white males) we sent to Austin to take care of the state's business. Glad you spent so much of the taxpayer's time doing this. 🗺️

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Faculty Involvement in On-Campus Administrative Proceedings by Jennifer D. Jasper, Attorney-at-Law West, Webb, Allbritton & Gentry, P.C.

Public and private universities have various internal processes and procedures designed to handle disputes ranging from student discipline to tenure review. These internal processes often involve a reviewing committee, or a single decision maker who reviews evidence and makes a decision. Faculty participation in these processes is encouraged, and can in instances burnish a faculty member's credentials and build a resume.

If you are selected or volunteer to participate on a reviewing committee or in a role as the decision-maker, you should understand the real responsibility you are taking on.

While each school has its own set of procedures that are typically outlined in a handbook, manual, or departmental guidelines, those procedures don't exist in a vacuum. Constitutional protections apply to students and faculty in these scenarios, and the university-sanctioned procedure may not always pass constitutional muster. Faculty should make sure to understand applicable policies and rules, including who has the burden of proof, and what that burden is. Faculty should also speak up if they believe adequate process is not being given and should ask questions to the committee chair or other designated leader as they arise. If a student or faculty member's due process rights have been violated, the decision-maker could find herself in the line of fire.

So consider this: when serving on such a committee, any decisions you make need to be taken very seriously and thoughtfully. While your decision may ultimately be reviewed by a "higher" layer in the bureaucracy, it is more often the case that those reviewing layers simply "rubber stamp" what the original decision-maker found. In other words, do not labor under the assumption that someone else will catch a mistake, make things right, or provide additional due process. You can't pass the buck to your institution to get these decisions right. When you are the decision-maker, the buck stops with you. Don't find yourself on the wrong end of a lawsuit, and don't expect your institution to bail you out. Take your role seriously and remember only you can make the difference, and it is up to you to provide a fair and thorough process. 

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Guns on Campus

by Allen Martin, Professor Emeritus, Dept. of Social Sciences,
University of Texas - Tyler


Guns are legal on Texas college campuses. So how safe do you feel? How safe are you actually?

Gun issues have resulted in battle lines being drawn and redrawn on campus carry. But where does safety reside? Last century, long guns were on campuses as many guys went hunting early before classes and then returned home. Who worried about that and why is the legality of guns on campus a concern now given that murderers and terrorists don't care about legalities? True, a student may become upset or crazy, but surely won't bother to read the rules about gun possession.

Let's first note that there are more guns in the US than citizens. Note also that guns have been everywhere in the US forever, especially recently with the explosion of gun purchases. Gun violence is much reduced now except in the largest cities where guns are banned, showing that efforts to prevent gun ownership actually seems to increase murder rates. This is rather similar to the increased number of murders in the United Kingdom and Australia following stiffened gun registration, bans, and confiscation (see, e. g., *Cooking the Books* in England).

What to do? Two Texas laws, handgun licenses and campus carry, seem set. The HL is open to citizens 21 and older. Then the hardest part of getting the HL is having to pay for it. Everyone can make a near perfect score on the shooting and written portions of the test. You are sane if you say so and the instructor thinks so. Now you are allowed to carry legally on campus, maybe even in classrooms. One could say we asked for it.

The prohibition of guns on campus eventually led to the antithesis—surprise! Since moderate positions got nowhere before the new law, I re-propose that more than an HL should be required for legal carry on campus. To wit: In order to carry on campus one must pass both tactical firearms and active shooter courses. Additionally, after getting this training and screening, one should have to check in with and be cleared by the campus cops. The hope is that this moderate stance will produce greater safety and be able to survive the political forces that would prohibit or totally open up legal carrying of guns on campus. Opening the safety valve a bit may reduce violations of campus policies and cut down on the college mass shooting rate which is less than one a decade.

Acknowledge that people with guns and bad intent avoid places where there may be people with guns and good intent. Criminologists have known this forever. Give up on prohibition; it just does not work in a free society, but neither does reckless anything goes. A moderate position on firearms can work. Who would oppose liberty with reasonable safe guards? 

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Philosophy of Teaching by Dan Phillips, Department of Dance Sam Houston State University

Learning is a risk. It was no easier for Lewis and Clark to inch their way through the wilderness than it is for anyone—from children to post-graduates—to find a path through what to each person is a symbolic wilderness. It takes nerve and a whole lot of energy to leave the security of the “known.” The dangers and pitfalls are just as severe symbolically as with a Jacques Cousteau conversation with a shark. I believe this is true whether a student is an “A” or a “D” student. The pressures are the same, only the speed at which one covers territory is different. It is just as demeaning for the “D” student to get an “F” as it is for the “A” student to get a “B”.

Students are human beings—vulnerable, touchable, irritable, aspiring, and equally as capable of disappointment as roaring laughs and euphoric victories. I see all of them as eminently more experienced than I in at least one area each could name if asked. However, it usually happens that in the area of dance, I am more experienced than they—not more intelligent or clever or resourceful—I have simply lived longer in this subject area than they. Therein lies my credibility to coax, suggest, encourage, pontificate, sympathize, empathize, question, wonder, and above all, guide what I assume to be minds and bodies that will respect and enjoy the material as much as I do, if I show them how. I think that is critical—to help students get as excited about the material to be mastered as I get.

Further, I don't see the material in my courses as “materials to be ingested and kept,” in case they might “need them someday.” Instead I see each course as one point of view of the field of dance to be integrated into students' perceptions. In beginning classes this takes the form of a many-sided general view, to help develop a rudimentary ability to sense how the larger subject area could possibly interest them, and at the same time arm them to synthesize more advanced concepts later on. In more specialized, advanced courses, I see the material as one aspect of the field of dance, useful to and interlocking with all other aspects. For, after all, a subject area isn't just a series of isolated parameters, but one huge, synergistic conglomerate. Presenting materials simply as facts about a field strikes me as a somewhat ridiculous way of wasting time, energy, and money—almost a mindless exercise in teacher ego versus student naiveté.

For me, teaching is also a risk, made perhaps the more fragile because learning is a risk. For me to stand in front of a group of people and remark, “It is important

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Philosophy of Teaching (cont.)

for you to follow me through this jungle to get to that mountain over there,” always makes my blood quicken a bit. What if they don’t want to go to that mountain? And anyway, why should they believe me? I may be wrong. Maybe it isn’t so important for them to go this way at all. But, if I can convince them that it is not only important, and that, if I should die tomorrow, they would go ahead anyway, then I will have equipped them to have a much deeper, more meaningful and more lasting education. Internal drive is far superior to any externally applied pressure. That summarizes the whole adventure for me.

I guess a teaching philosophy must at some point interface with teaching technique, so I will remark on a few of the more aberrant techniques that I employ. The first test is on the second day of class, and it is over the first names of everyone else in the class. Not only is it impossible to teach a dance class without knowing reflexively what someone’s name is (so as not to disturb motor process in corrections), but also it relaxes them in what sometimes can be a threatening experience. I give “at large” oral pop quizzes, whereby a person’s quiz for the next class period might be when I bump into them at the Student Center, when their minds are on their boyfriends, for instance. Or I step out from behind the door when they walk into class. I have found that instead of being objectionable, or irritating, it seems to encourage an esprit de corps, a kind of hunting for “berries” in each class presentation. I continue to give them pop quizzes on campus after the semester is finished when I see them, and tell them I will also hold their girlfriends and boyfriends responsible for the same material. We often go outside. I sometimes stand on the podium and sometimes lecture from underneath a table. I admit to my weaknesses and mistakes, but do not hesitate to claim my strengths. For small eight-o’clock classes I have occasionally brought donuts and coffee. Teachable moments don’t always occur in class—sometimes conversations between stalls in the restroom are the clinchers. I see my classes as just plain old me with plain old them—common folk struggling together. I think pulling rank is naïve, intimidating, and certain death to a class. It is always OK to have tried one’s best and failed, but never OK to not try. In short, I make it evident that I care.

I certainly am not presuming that I reach everyone. But I do believe that for each student that I flunk, I am also flunking myself: I have failed to motivate, and that person has failed to muster. If one of us had not failed in that thing, the other would not have failed. I am looking at simple material from above and they are looking at difficult material from beneath. Failure of either one of us to see the material as the other sees it results in a rapid breakdown of communication.

The students have hired me to use whatever resources I have to help them control concepts. So I figure I owe them my best shot—with cheer, energy and conviction.

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Philosophy of Teaching (cont.)

The only thing they really owe me in return is to tell me how successful my attempt has been. I do not let them leave the final examination until they have given me a hip-shot on an evaluation form—a no-holds-barred, four-letter-word, tell-it-like-it-is, anonymous evaluation. I realize that students do tend to get a bit sentimental on a teacher evaluation (“Oh, he’s not such a bad guy after all...”), and so I have tried to keep that in mind in reading my evaluations, particularly zeroing in on the lower evaluations, which are usually the most “telling.” Sour grapes or not, those are real feelings that maybe I can do something about when I get my perennial second chance next semester. One of the first things that will drive me from teaching is to sense that the collaboration is not working anymore. That’s when it will be time for me to look to other horizons. It is devastating to me when the collaboration does not work, but so deeply rejuvenating when it does.

(While he is still teaching as an adjunct dance faculty member at Sam Houston State University, Dan Phillips, with his wife Marsha, is also currently building low-income houses using recycled materials and unskilled labor. A sample of his teaching style is his TED talk at https://www.ted.com/talks/dan_phillips_creative_houses_from_reclaimed_stuff?language=en. For further background, see his company website, The Phoenix Commotion at <http://www.phoenixcommotion.com/>) 

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Texas Association of College Teachers Spring Meeting - March 4th, 2016

Cost is ONLY \$30.00 and includes Breakfast and Lunch



1100 Congress Ave, Austin, TX 78701

SPRING MEETING AGENDA

Friday, March 4th

- 8:00 A.M.** Breakfast at Capitol Cafeteria
- 9:00 A.M.** Senate Committee on State Affairs
- Shawn Opperman
- Sam Houston Bldg. #380
- 10:00 A.M.** Senate Committee on Higher Education
- Sarah Herrington & Johanna Sheffield
- Sam Houston Bldg. #320
- 12:00 P.M.** Lunch at Capitol Cafeteria
- 1:00 P.M.** TACT Board of Directors Meeting
- I.** Call to Order & President's Report
Mary Jo Garcia-Biggs

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II. Approval of Fall 2015 Minutes

III. Report of Nominating Committee, including
following offices:

a. President-Elect

b. Vice-President of Membership

c. Director(s)-At-Large

IV. Report - Legislative Committee: Peter Hugill

V. Report - Financial Committee: Matthew Capps

VI. Report - Mem. Committee: Stacey Bumstead

VII. Report - Executive Director: Chuck Hempstead

VIII. Other Business

IX. Adjourn

1:30 P.M. Constituents' Meeting

2:30 P.M. Adjourn 

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The TACT Nominating Committee is currently accepting nominations for the following positions to begin service June 1st, 2016.

1. President-Elect: Term = 1 year

DUTIES OF THE PRESIDENT-ELECT. Whenever the President is unable to perform the duties of the Presidency, it shall be the responsibility of the President-elect to assume the duties of the office for whatever period of time is necessary. The President-elect shall be a member of the State Board and be of general assistance to the President in sharing the responsibility of leadership for the Association. In case the Presidency becomes vacant, the President-elect shall immediately become President.

2. Vice-President of Membership: Term = 2 years

DUTIES OF THE VICE PRESIDENT OF MEMBERSHIP. The Vice President for Membership shall be responsible for chairing and coordinating the activities of the Membership Committee and working with the professional staff to develop marketing strategies aimed at further developing the membership.

3. Director(s)-At-Large: Term = 1 year

DUTIES OF THE DIRECTOR(S) AT LARGE. The Directors at Large shall be given liaison duties between the State Board and members. They shall provide support to the Vice Presidents of Membership and Legislative Affairs. Directors at Large should make an effort to improve communications between faculties and administrations on each campus where Texas Association of College Teachers has a presence, should be actively involved in decisions made by the State Board and attempt to improve public awareness of the objectives of the Texas Association of College Teachers to promote excellence in higher education in Texas.

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If you would like to nominate yourself or another TACT member, please email office@tact.org. If you have any questions, please call Christina @ 512-419-9275



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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.

[Click Here](#) to Contribute

Thank you to the 2015-2016 contributors

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Donna Cox

Gary Coulton

Lynn Godkin

Chuck Hempstead

Harvey D. Johnson

Suzanne Lindt

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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) 873-7404.



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