



# Texas Council of Faculty Senates

A Federation of Texas Faculty Governance

## Fall 2025 Meeting Minutes Embassy Suites – Austin Central

September 19-20, 2025

### In attendance: The Executive Board Members<sup>1</sup>

Tabitha Morton, President  
Joseph Velasco, Past President  
Wynne Chin, Treasurer and Past President  
James Woosley, President Emeritus  
Zachary Valdes, Vice President, East Region

TCFS Members Present: 34  
Universities Represented: 18

#### East Region

Lamar University –  
Beaumont  
Prairie View A&M  
University  
Sam Houston State  
University  
Texas A&M  
University –  
College Station  
University of Houston  
University of Houston  
– Clear Lake

#### Northeast Region

Texas Woman’s  
University  
University of North  
Texas – Dallas  
University of North  
Texas – Denton  
UNT Health Science  
Center

#### South Central Region

Texas A&M  
International  
University – Laredo  
Texas A&M  
University – Central  
Texas  
Texas A&M  
University – Corpus  
Christi  
Texas A&M  
University- Victoria  
Texas State University

#### West Region

Sul Ross State  
University  
Tarleton State  
University  
West Texas A&M  
University

### Representatives from Each Region:

East: 14  
Northeast: 9  
South Central: 7  
West: 5

AAUP, TACT, TAFT, TFA, and NAACP Representatives: 21  
Total Attendees: 55

### Call to Order of the Business Meeting, September 20, 2025

President Tabitha Morton (PVAMU, Political Science) called the meeting to order as there were enough TCFS members in attendance to constitute a quorum.

<sup>1</sup>Corrected to reflect that Christopher A. Gabler, South Central Region Vice President (UTRGV), was not present.

## **Approval of Prior Business Meeting Minutes**

President Morton asked for a motion from the floor to approve the minutes of the February 22, 2025, meeting. James Woosley (TAMU, Kinesiology and Sport Management) motioned to approve the minutes, which were seconded. The minutes were unanimously approved by show of hands.

## **Treasurer's Report**

Treasurer Wynne Chin (UH, Decision and Information Sciences) presented the treasurer's report. He reported \$1877 received in fall conference registration fees and \$5771 received for institutional dues. He stated that at the spring 2025 meeting, members voted to increase individual registration fees and annual institutional dues, switching to a tiered system to be determined by the Executive Board. However, in July, the Executive Board chose not to change the fall and spring meeting fee structure, as institutions were adjusting to comply with SB 37. Therefore, the 2025-26 registration fees remain at \$75 per attendee per meeting and the annual dues are \$400.

Treasurer Chin reported that fall meeting registration dropped to thirty-five from fifty in 2024, likely because many Texas faculty senates were dissolved under SB 37. He also compared dues received in the fall with dues paid in 2024-25 (\$10,500) stating that he hoped the shortfall would be received by spring 2026. He also noted the generosity of System Chancellors from Texas A&M University System, University of Houston System, and Texas State University System who supported TCFS by giving \$5000 each in 2024-25. He mentioned that letters asking System Chancellors to make similar commitments this year would be sent out soon. Past President Velasco (SRSU, Communication) interjected that timing of letters was important. Over the summer, the TCFS Board felt that it would not be wise to send letters asking for money while also advocating for faculty senate survival. He said, now that September 1 had past, letters could be sent with a unified message from the TCFS Board and System faculty co-signers requesting "a commitment of \$5000 or more during these tough times as this organization (TCFS) serves all Systems' best interests and the common good for Texas higher education." President Morton said she had already sent a letter to Texas A&M University System asking for financial support for this year given their change in Chancellors and would also request continued monetary support for 2025-26 from the other Texas University Systems. Treasurer Chin encouraged members in a position to do so, to co-sign the letter and/or talk with their System's leadership encouraging TCFS support. After the Treasurer's report concluded, attendees discussed strategies to promote System support, including branding for various donation tiers, establishing institutional partnerships, and exploring other innovative approaches. Past President Velasco asked members to communicate their ideas and interest in being a co-signer on a letter to System Chancellors by sending an email to the Board.

## **Community Colleges and TCFS Membership**

President Morton introduced David Albert (President Austin Community College AFT Local; Vice President Central Texas Region; Texas AAUP-AFT) who would explain his reasoning for offering TCFS membership to Community Colleges. Professor Albert noted that community colleges participated in TCFS ten to fifteen years ago, but it has since faded. He said that

technically, community colleges are institutions of higher education. He suggested that this might be the right time to “reinvite and engage” them to be members given that higher education is under attack and in crisis. He thought it to be a commonsense idea given the diminished TCFS membership. He suggested that once community college systems are engaged, they may be able to offer \$250 to \$500 in support, depending on size. Initially, there might be more interest from the larger community college systems because they have more active governance organization. He mentioned that numerous systems are currently engaged with Texas AAUP.

Past President Velasco read the bylaws which state:

Active members of Texas Council of Faculty, Senates shall be dues paying faculty, governance organizations of the public state, colleges, and universities in Texas as defined by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board. Membership shall be divided into four geographic regions, as determined by the executive committee.

He asked Professor Albert to rephrase what he would like the body to consider since there was no need to modify the bylaws. Professor Albert made a motion for TCFS to invite community college faculty senate representatives to our next TCFS meeting and subsequently in perpetuity. Kevin Crouch (SHSU, Acting and Directing) seconded the motion. Past President Velasco opened the floor for discussion of the motion. Jessica Velasco (SRSU, Political Science and Public Administration) asked what happened that caused a lack of community college membership. Treasurer Chin said that he had been involved with TCFS for ten plus years and that nothing had changed in terms of the bylaws. It was simply that membership of the community colleges fell off. He also pointed out that because David Albert was not a TCFS member, he could not put forth a motion. He acknowledged Professor Albert's point and proposed the Executive Committee discuss whether reaching out to community colleges is worthwhile. Jim Woosley (TAMU, Kinesiology and Sport Management) remarked that over the years, people had discussed the real differences between community and two-year colleges and the four-year universities. He mentioned that there were moments of genuine controversy, and certain individuals might have challenged the ideas presented.

President Morton appointed Joey Velasco as co-chair since TCFS is in a transition of Presidency. Chair Velasco said because there was no motion on the floor, TCFS Executive Committee would study the suggestion and consider sending invitations to community colleges. Anne Egelston (Tarleton, Environmental Science) put forth a motion that the TCFS executive board investigate the expansion and inclusion of community colleges and private institutions. Nayda Pittendrigh (TAMUV, English) seconded the motion. The floor was open for discussion.

Marc Crawford (UNTHSC, Physical Therapy) pointed out that members had spent the weekend focused on SB 37, which affects state institutions. He asked whether bringing in private institutions—an entirely different group under dissimilar roles—would dilute the impact of this body, and in doing so, how would it affect the mission and the scope of what this body is cable of doing? Several members spoke supporting the need to include both community colleges and private institutions recognizing pros and cons, acknowledging that they were not insurmountable and that we need to think of ways of strengthening the organization in challenging times. It was suggested that including these two groups could ensure the continued existence of TCFS. In the

interest of time, the chair called for a vote. The motion carried by voice vote. Chair Velasco said the Executive Committee would report back to the members with the findings of their study.

### **Discussion on Best Practices Following Implementation of SB 37**

Coby Condrey (UNT, Research Support Services, Libraries) asked if there was a way for institutions to share best practices for moving forward following the implementation of SB 37? Chair Velasco suggested the possibility of sharing reports from an institution's TCFS member or presiding officer on TCFS Google Drive. He noted that it was something that had been discussed by the executive committee as a way of sharing information such as current practices, strategizing, and learning about "what's medicinal to our adjustments and what's been toxic responses to SB 37." Wynn Chin chimed in saying that this is the essence of what TCFS is about, looking at best practices and shared governance. He encouraged members to email Tabitha Morton and members of the Executive Committee with ideas independent of the possibility of using Google Drive. He stated that the Executive Committee would continue "brainstorming and to gather as much information from you all as possible to share and compare exactly how everybody is working through this situation.

Emarely Rosa-Dávila (TWU, Social Work) inquired about what information could be legally shared with colleagues or the public. Wynne Chin said "Ideally, whatever is officially approved is the way to go." However, by definition, once something is sent out via email, it becomes available. He cautioned, "Don't send out stupid things by email, because once it's out there, it is out there." Chair Velasco pointed out that Texas is a "one party state," which means you can legally record a conversation without informing the other person, unless it is clearly stated and agreed upon that the conversation is private.

### **Meeting Summary and Next Steps**

Chair Velasco summarized the meeting saying that the Executive Committee would do the following:

- Continue to analyze data from the survey.
- Compile the information from the round tables.
- Send out messages to this body to solicit more information, to share ideas, and to facilitate collaboration.

Chair Velasco said these were selling points for institutions' administrators because often, they are unaware of what is going on at the other University Systems. "It is very powerful for you to involve each other in those processes." He said administrators may give an "explicit thumbs up" to be involved with TCFS to learn from you what other institutions are doing.

Jim Woosley suggested that the Executive Committee get a list of institutions that have updated and posted their bylaws on a website. He asked for a show of hands of units that have already posted their bylaws. University of Houston-Clear Lake; University of North Texas - Dallas, and Texas Woman's University were among those who raised their hands.

Moving on to the Spring meeting, President Morton asked if members would be interested in having the meeting at the current location in Austin, or if they would like to make suggestions for another venue? Treasurer Chin said that he has fiduciary concerns about the cost and that he had only shown the revenue side of the treasurer's report. He said the meeting costs exceed the income, and if this continues, funds will run out. He mentioned that an associate provost at the University of Houston in Katy said there was a reasonable hotel in that area, so that might be an option. He indicated that if member institutions are interested in hosting TCFS for the customary Friday and Saturday meetings, this could also be considered as an alternative. He went on to say that one of the strengths of our meetings is the synergy between

TCFS and Texas AAUP. Texas AAUP might say certain parts of the meeting might not be doable on a university campus. So, we might want to investigate an adjacent hotel, if that is the route we decide to take.

A member asked if the Executive Committee were to decide to include private institutions, would they have similar issues as Texas AAUP with holding a meeting on a Texas public university campus? Jim Woosley noted that having the meeting in Austin in proximity to the capital in legislative years was something to think about as well. Chair Velasco noted other options to consider were previous locations such as the Embassy Suites San Antonio Brooks Hotel and Spa. He said the Executive Committee would welcome suggestions and feedback on our next meeting location, including barriers that may prevent you from attending, and asked members to email them to the Committee.

Chair Velasco explained that for this meeting, we would be departing from the usual discussion of themes of the Roundup reports from Round Table discussions, which most often were broad in nature. Instead, the Executive Committee decided to take a different approach by focusing on Senate Bills 37, 26, and 15 so that “we could get down to strategizing.” President Morton requested that all Round Table groups forward their discussion notes to her so she could analyze and organize them into a comprehensive report centered on strategic approaches. The report will be sent to each TCFS member, separate from the fall newsletter.

Chair Velasco reported that in July 2024, a Shared Governance White Paper working group was formed and had been meeting regularly until spring break when they paused their work due to SB 37. He said initially the goal was to create a policy document that could be transplanted into any faculty handbook or administrative policy manual, on shared governance, or even potentially to legislation. He said that the months of working together and sharing drafts, the group came up with three separate documents: one that's more of a condensed elevator speech on shared governance; one that's larger with a couple paragraphs that could land in a policy document; and one that is more extensive in terms of best practices. He noted that the group took inspiration from UT Austin's white paper on shared governance from a decade ago. He said that the group had not died and were looking to continue their work. He asked those who might be interested in being part of the group to talk with him after the meeting.

### **Announcements**

President Morton reminded the TCFS members that the Texas-AAUP meeting was underway in the adjacent ballroom should anyone want to attend.

### **Adjournment**

President Morton adjourned the meeting at 10:45 am.