



TEXAS COUNCIL OF
FACULTY SENATES

Texas Council of Faculty Senates

A Federation of Texas Faculty Governance

Fall 2026 Business Meeting Minutes

Embassy Suites Austin Central
September 26, 2026

IN ATTENDANCE:

The Executive Board Members

Tabitha Morton, President
Christopher A. Gabler, President Elect
Wynne Chin, Treasurer and Past President
James Woosley, President Emeritus
Joseph Velasco, President Emeritus
Zachary Valdes, Vice President, East Region
Melissa McKay, Northeast Region
Scott Johnson, Vice President, South Central Region
Jessica Velasco, Vice President, West Region

TCFS Members

*Sheila Baker, *Riyaz Basha, *Maria Benavides, William Bush, *Stephen Cotten, *Marc Crawford,
*John C. Criscione, Kevin Crouch, *Berenice de la Cruz, James Dupree, Anne Egelston, *Joshua
Goodson, *Kevin Jetton, *Robert Jones, *Andrew Klein, Nick Lantz, Jody Marin, *Curtis McDowell,
*Jennifer Miller-Ray, Tami Morton, *Ferhat Ozturk, Britine Perkins, *Patrick Peters, *Ashleigh Petts,
David Rembert, *Suzanne Scheller, *Stefan Schöberlein, *Piyush Shroff, *Cynthia L. Sosa, Eric Walden.

TCFS Members Present: Friday 39; Saturday 29*
Universities Represented: Friday 26; Saturday 19

Texas AAUP-AFT Guests: Friday: 15
Total Attendees: 54

East Region

Lamar Institute of Technology
Lamar University – Beaumont
Prairie View A&M University
Sam Houston State University
Texas A&M University System

Texas A&M University – College Station
University of Houston
University of Houston – Clear Lake
University of Houston – Downtown

Northeast Region

East Texas A&M University
Texas Woman's University
University of North Texas – Dallas.

University of North Texas – Denton
University of North Texas Health Science
Ctr. – Ft. Worth

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 – Kingsville

Texas A&M University – San Antonio
Texas A&M University – Victoria
Texas State University
University of Texas – Rio Grande Valley

West Region

Sul Ross State University
Tarleton State University
Texas Tech University

Representatives from Each Region:

East: 17
Northeast: 8
South Central: 8
West: 6

CALL TO ORDER THE BUSINESS MEETING, SEPTEMBER 26, 2026

President Tabitha Morton (PVAMU, Political Science) called the meeting to order at 8:42 a.m.

APPROVAL OF PRIOR BUSINESS MEETING MINUTES

The minutes from the previous meeting were approved. Motion to approve was made by Jessica Velasco (SRSU, Political Science & Public Administration) and seconded by Christopher Gabler (UTRGV, Earth, Environmental, and Marine Sciences). The motion passed by affirmation.

REPORT OF THE TREASURER

Wynne Chin (UH, Decision and Information Science) presented the Treasurer's Report, providing an overview of Texas Council of Faculty Senate's (TCFS) current financial status and future fiscal outlook.

Discussion focused on increasing meeting costs and declining revenue streams. While current revenues and expenses are approximately balanced, projections indicate that TCFS could face a financial deficit after the next meeting if current trends continue. Particular concern was expressed regarding the loss of participation and financial support from institutions within the University of Texas System, a change attributed in part to the effects of Senate Bill 37. Support from the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) through the joint conference arrangement has helped offset some meeting costs.

A financial review subgroup will be established to conduct a comprehensive examination of meeting revenues and expenses and develop recommendations for improving long-term financial sustainability. The subgroup is expected to report on its findings and present options at the next meeting.

Discussion also addressed current funding sources. Member institutions pay an annual membership fee of \$500, and TCFS requests voluntary system-level contributions of \$5,000 from chancellors. On January 6, 2026, TCFS received a \$5000 check from Texas A&M University System in response to a request for support in fall 2025. Regional vice presidents will work with faculty leaders to encourage support for system-level funding requests, and President Morton will distribute a template letter for use in communications with chancellors. It was suggested to include a statement explaining targeted use of funding support with concrete benefits for university systems.

Members emphasized the importance of communicating TCFS's value and contributions to statewide higher education when requesting support. Questions were also raised about declining participation from some campuses and the need to better understand barriers to attendance and membership renewal. Suggestions included gathering data from member institutions, potentially incorporating questions into the annual roundup report, exploring hybrid or virtual meeting options, and considering alternative membership structures such as individual memberships for those whose institutions are not members.

Additional suggestions included partnering with conferences to reduce costs, developing training videos for new faculty senate leaders, and identifying institutions willing to host meetings. Members noted both the cost-saving advantages of virtual participation and concerns about reduced engagement and the current political environment. It was also noted that AAUP cannot meet on university campuses.

NEW BUSINESS

Membership, Expansion, and Community College Engagement

Members briefly discussed opening TCFS participation to individuals vs institutional-only membership. Meetings currently are open by registration, but voting remains restricted to member institutions.

President Morton reported ongoing discussions regarding whether and how community colleges might be formally incorporated into TCFS activities. Conversations with community college representatives indicate interest in understanding the specific benefits of affiliation. The organization remains in an information-gathering phase. The possibility of establishing a separate affiliated organization was discussed but does not currently appear to have support among community college leaders.

Expanding membership and organizing campus stakeholders, including student government associations and alumni, were identified as key ways to strengthen TCFS's influence.

Meeting Formats and Participation

Members discussed the benefits and drawbacks of in-person, hybrid, and virtual meeting formats. Several members emphasized the networking and relationship-building benefits of in-person meetings that are hard to replicate online, while others suggested that a hybrid approach could increase accessibility and reduce costs, but risk diluting in-person turnout. Proposed compromises included offering selected sessions virtually while retaining in-person business and networking activities.

Higher Education Policy Concerns and Core Curriculum Initiatives

Members discussed emerging statewide higher education initiatives, including proposed changes to the core curriculum, workforce-focused educational models, and three-year degree programs. Upcoming legislative session and coordinating-board priorities ("Build a Stronger Texas" workforce emphasis, skill-based metrics) are driving proposals for 3-year degrees, times-of-value/certificate of value metrics, and tighter alignment to workforce demand. Concerns were raised regarding the future direction of Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) priorities, the value placed on various academic disciplines, and the potential standardization of core curriculum requirements across institutions and systems. Members voiced concern that consolidating courses may drop critical foundational areas (math/science) or create multiple specialized tracks; >3,800 distinct core course listings were referenced as a sign of fragmentation. Members noted that discussions about student outcomes, workforce preparation, and time-to-degree are increasingly shaping state policy conversations.

Members expressed interest in monitoring these developments more closely and identifying opportunities for faculty participation in policy discussions. Suggestions included coordinating with AAUP efforts, engaging students and alumni in advocacy efforts, and gathering additional information about current state-level initiatives.

Creation of TCFS Subcommittee

Jessica Velasco clarified TCFS's role in responding to these policy developments and suggested that the organization consider forming working groups, conducting research, and developing position statements as appropriate.

Scott Johnson (TAMU-CC, History) moved to establish a TCFS subcommittee to investigate and monitor THECB plans, priorities, and related higher education initiatives. These include proposals to shorten/reshape the core (references to 30-hour cores, 90-hour degree proposals, and three-year degree pilots) and a simple syllabus/standardized syllabus initiative. The motion was seconded by Jennifer Miller-Ray (SRSU, Education).

Discussion clarified that the subcommittee would issue a call for volunteers and should seek opportunities to engage directly with THECB representatives. Jessica Velasco emphasized the importance of coordinating with THECB as part of the group's work. The motion passed unanimously (20-0-0).

Campus Reports/Roundup

Sul Ross State University highlighted significant budget cuts, faculty pressured toward non-tenure roles, facility failures and mold (reported health impacts), and removal of cultural/Latino imagery from public spaces.

Related to tenure and promotion issues, multiple campuses reported goalpost shifts (raised research expectations) that led to denials or pressure to move faculty to non-tenure tracks; instances led some faculty to seek AAUP membership for legal protection.

Administrations are reallocating resources (large spending on centralized marketing and standardization efforts like a "Caring Campus" campaign and simple syllabus rollout) while infrastructure and faculty support decline (example: \$3.5M shortfall mentioned on one campus).

Additional Discussion

Members emphasized expanding relationships with external allies and partner organizations, pursuing additional fundraising opportunities, and identifying groups that support TCFS's mission and advocacy. They proposed short training videos on shared governance, ombudsperson roles, and presiding officer responsibilities to preserve institutional knowledge amid turnover. The videos could generate revenue and streamline onboarding across campuses. TCFS and Texas AAUP were encouraged to coordinate materials to avoid duplication. Members also learned that the AAUP Summer Teaching Institute will return next year with workshops on governance, advocacy, legislative updates, and disciplinary topics; chapters and faculty seeking training and networking opportunities were encouraged to attend. AAUP's national organization is also increasing its involvement by preparing letters and policy positions and tracking accreditation and federal proposals, including Compact 2.0 and accreditation changes. Members

were encouraged to attend AAUP events to better understand partner roles, identify allies, and align strategies.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, President Morton adjourned the meeting at 9:45 a.m.