

FINANCIAL AID ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board

COMMITTEE CHAIR	VICE CHAIR
<p>Denise Welch Financial Aid Director, Panola College Email: dwelch@panola.edu Term: 12/01/2018-06/30/2023 Denise has served as Director of Financial Aid at Panola College for more than ten years. Denise has been the Financial Aid Director at Panola College since 2008 and has more than 24 years of financial aid experience. Over the years she served as chair for the training committee and has been involved in training new aid officers on state and regionals levels. She has served on several committees in TASFAA, SWASFAA and NASFAA. She is a SWASFAA Past President with prior service as the Texas Delegate on the Board of Directors, also serving TASFAA Board of Directors as Vice President and Representative at Large. She has been active with NASFAA in several different task forces. She also served on the 2017-2018 NASFAA Board of Directors as the Regional Representative. She is currently serving as Representative at Large on the NASFAA Board of Directors. She is in her third year as a member of the FAAC for the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board.</p>	<p>Garrett, Rachelè Director of Financial Aid Stephen F. Austin University Email: Nixonhr@sfasu.edu Term: 12/01/2018-06/30/2023 In Ms. Garrett’s role as Financial Aid Director and with the help of those in her division, she has worked tirelessly to lower student debt. By staying in touch with several state entities, Rachelè has also initiated steps to help reduce SFAs parent loan debt amounts. Her knowledge of the financial aid process has also been instrumental in helping to secure needed financial aid for students who enroll in SFAs summer bridge program. Rachelè's leadership efforts have also resulted in her department being available for presentations during campus orientations. She also is part of the SFA Road Show that travels to various off-campus events detailing the importance of completing FASFA applications, adhering to timelines, and providing various pathways to assist students on how to best use their financial aid awards</p>
PAST CHAIR	THECB REPRESENTATIVE
<p>Ed Kerestly Director of Financial Aid Angelo State University Term: 12/01/2018 – 10/31/2022 Ed Kerestly began working in financial aid in 1994. For the past three years, he has served as the Director of Financial Aid at Angelo State University (TX). He has also led financial aid offices at the University of Texas Permian Basin (TX), Abilene Christian University (TX), Grand Valley State University (MI), Calvin University (MI) and Cornerstone University (MI), as well as worked in the areas of admissions of student life at Greenville University (IL). Over the years, Ed has served in various leadership roles in state, regional, and national financial aid organizations. As the father of three college age children – all attending Angelo State University – he knows firsthand the challenge of paying for college, the importance of financial aid, and the commitment needed to assure kids get a great college education.</p>	<p>DeChá Reid Senior Director, Financial Aid Services Email: DeCha.Reid@highered.texas.gov DeChá Reid has been in the financial aid industry for 21 years and started with the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board in 2015 as the Director of Financial Aid Services. Over the past 6 years, she has made huge strides to improve and streamline various processes surrounding state financial aid administration and was one of the driving forces behind the consolidation of the FA reports into the three cycle Financial Aid Database report and the Grant Payment system. Before THECB, DeChá worked both at a private and public institutions in Texas. She is known to her colleagues and peers as a reliable resource that is dedicated to the improvement of financial aid programs.</p>

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COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Adler, Jackie

Executive Director of Financial Aid
Email: Jackie.adler@tstc.edu

Term: 11/1/2021 – 7/31/2024

Ms. Adler has over 40 years of financial aid experience in the 2-year college sector. She spent 16 years and Hill College and has been at TSTC for 28 years. She has served as a TASFAA Board member, NASFAA trainer, and has been on TG’s Lender/School Advisory Board. As Executive Director of Financial Aid at Texas State Technical College, she oversees the financial aid operations of the college’s 11 locations and is responsible for the awarding of over \$60 million dollars of Federal, state and institutional funds. She works with a leadership team that strives to place more Texans and provides outreach and assistance to encourage enrollment and persistence. Her goal is to improve the financial application process for students and to provide excellent customer service.

Bholan, Dr. Ben

Principal – Arlington ISD
Email: BBholan1@aisd.net

Term: 11/01/2019 – 10/31/2022

Dr. Bholan has been an educator for over 24 years, having a reputation as a leader who improves students’ outcomes. He served as the founding principal of our district's first early college high school, Arlington Collegiate High School in which nearly 90% of the first graduating class earned their associate degree. He now serves as the founding principal of our second early college high school, Arlington College and Career High School. Dr. Bholan is very interested in finding ways to improve the overall financial aid informational processes for parents and students, setting goals and professional development experiences for himself aligned with this area of need.

Chen, Victoria

Director of Scholarships and Student Financial Aid – Texas Christian University
Email: V.Chen@tcu.edu

Term: 11/01/2020 – 10/31/2023

Dr. Chen has many years of experience as an aid administrator, at both public and private universities. She has extensive experience in managing state aid programs. During her career she has managed all state grant programs for TCU and served as loan coordinator for the College Access Loan.

Gonzales, Dede

Associate Director, Financial Aid and Scholarships Texas State University, San Marcos, Texas
Email: dedegonzales@txstate.edu

Term: 12/01/2020-10/31/2023

Ms. Gonzales has over 20 years of experience and expertise in financial aid administration, as well as knowledge of the four-year public university sector. Her experience in the administration of federal, state, and institutional financial aid programs as well as broad experience in student customer service, financial literacy and regulatory compliance operations makes her an ideal addition to the FAAC

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Ingram, Bridgette

Director, Student Financial Assistance
Texas A&M University, College Station, Texas
Email: BIIngram99@tamu.edu

Term: 12/01/2020-10/31/2023

Ms. Ingram has served in the financial aid industry for over 20 years, she has been with the financial aid office at Texas A&M for just over 16 years, prior to her service at Texas A&M she was a member of Blinn College financial aid team. Bridgette has served the Texas Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (TASFAA) as Chair of the Scholarship Committee and member of the fall conference committee; she also served the Southwest Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (SWASFAA) as chair of the membership committee. In addition, she has also served on a couple of task force for the Texas Veterans Commission as well. Bridgette has presented at state and national conference on financial aid and veterans benefit programs.

Jones, Cecelia

Director of Financial Aid
Jarvis Christian College
Email: ckjones@jarvis.edu

Term: 11/1/2020 – 7/31/2023

Cecelia Jones is currently the Director of Financial Aid at Jarvis Christian College. She has nearly 30 years of experience as a financial aid administrator and has worked with financial aid professionals while serving in state, regional, and national associations. Cecelia has served on TASFAA's Board of Directors as a member-at-large and several TASFAA committees. Additionally, she presently serves as a member of the ICUT E-Committee. Cecelia earned her Bachelor's Degree from Wiley College and her Master of Education degree from Abilene Christian University.

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<p>Leafgreen, Melet Director of Financial Aid UT Southwestern Medical Center Email: Melet.Leamgreen@UTSouthwestern.edu Term: 11/1/2021 – 7/31/2024 Melet Leafgreen has worked in Financial Aid for 21 years. The first 16 years she held various positions at TCU in Fort Worth, then moved to UT Arlington. Since 2017 she has been the Director of Student Financial Aid at UT Southwestern Medical Center in Dallas. She has served TASFAA as Board Member, Committee Chair, and as TASFAA President. She currently serves as a NASFAA Credential test content editor. She has three dogs, one husband, and one fantastic 7 year old son.</p>	<p>Nolan, Holly Executive Director of Financial Aid University of Houston – Clear Lake Email: Nolan@UHCL.edu Term: 11/01/2020-10/31/2023 Ms. Nolan is extremely knowledgeable about financial aid opportunities for Texas students, and most importantly the eligibility and processes for applying for financial aid. Finally, Ms. Nolan has provided key insights and leadership while working effectively to utilize federal and state funding provided to students as we navigate the COVID-19 pandemic.</p>
<p>Norton, Shonna Director of Social & Emotional Services Wichita Falls ISD Email: snorton@wfisd.net Term: 03/01/2020-10/31/2023 In her role with WFISD, Mrs. Norton has streamlined and organized the district's process of informing parents and students about their college and career options, including financial aid. She plans and organizes District events for college readiness, financial aid, dual credit, college application, and FAFSA completion to ensure all families are receiving the same information and level of service. Her previous work experience in academic guidance, college and career advising, campus administration, and district administration gives her a unique perspective on helping students and parents receive the information and services they need.</p>	<p>Peterson, Steven Director of Financial Aid and Scholarships Blinn College Email: steven.peterson@blinn.edu Term: 11/01/2020-10/31/2023 Mr. Peterson has over 28 years working in financial aid and holding various positions at St. Edwards University where he gained experience working with Ellucian Banner and ARGOS. He has extensive experience in writing ARGOS reports for reporting and processing needs and ensuring the data he is pulling is accurate. His most recent experience has been at Blinn College on the Brenham campus. Mr. Peterson understands the short and long term impacts of regulations and financial aid.</p>

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<p>Ramirez, Sal College and Career Readiness Coordinator El Paso ISD Email: sramirez@episd.org Term: 7/1/2021 – 7/30/2021 Mr. Ramirez, with over 15 years of experience in education, has worked for the last five years as representative/campus coordinator of the College and Career Readiness Department with the El Paso Independent School District. Working with faculty, administration, parents and students, Mr. Ramirez has guided families and students in choosing options that are financially and educationally best suited for their circumstances. Mr. Ramirez has been working in partnership with the College Access New Tech Network grant program for the previous two years. Through this grant partnership with NTN, Mr. Ramirez has been able to focus on successful financial aid planning targeting minority groups that have difficulty accessing resources to financial aid, scholarships, and grants. As the College and Career Readiness Coordinator at an early college high school, Mr. Ramirez has been able to implement initiatives and programs that have streamlined the financial aid process to make the challenges of applying less of a burden for students and families.</p>	<p>Ratliff, Thomas Director of Student Financial Services Abilene Christian University Email: thomas.ratliff@acu.edu Term: 11/01/2019-10/31/2022 New to Texas, Mr. Ratliff came to Abilene Christian University with 30 years of Financial Aid administration experience from proprietary, public and private universities. Before coming to Texas, Thomas served for 13 years on the Indiana Student Financial Aid Administrators Governmental Relations Committee contributing to student aid policy discussions for the Indiana Commission for Higher Education.</p>
<p>Ruiz, Joseph Director of Financial Aid Services Del Mar College Email: jruiz.156@delmar.edu Term: 11/1/2021 – 7/31/2021 Mr. Ruiz was born and raised in Kingsville, Texas. He earned a Bachelor's of Arts Degree in Political Science and Spanish at Texas A&M University Kingsville. He also earned a Master's of Science degree in Education Administration at Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi. Joseph began his career working for various non-profit organizations. Joseph went on to work for Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi in the Office of Student Financial Aid where he held titles of Financial Aid Outreach Advisor, Assistant Director, and Associate Director. He worked on that campus for 12 years where he provided countless hours of presentations for students, parents, high school counselors, staff, and faculty regarding financial literacy, entrance and exit loan counseling, and completing the FAFSA process. He also has presented at many professional associations presented at NASFAA, TASFAA, College Board, AACRO, TAACRO, FSA, and Riverside HS Counselor Network.</p>	<p>Sides, Tevian Director of Financial Aid Western Texas College Email: tevian.sides@wtc.edu Term: 11/2/2020 – 10/31/2023 Tevian Sides has been the Director of Financial Aid a Western Texas College for only 2 ½ years. Tevian received a Bachelor's of Business Administration from Tarleton State University in 1995. Prior to becoming a member of the financial aid community, Tevian was a project Assistant for an architectural firm as well as worked at a Bank and an Auditor. Tevian enjoys being able to assist low-income families with their educational journey especially with providing financial assistance. "I have enjoyed this position more than I ever thought I would. It is such a great feeling to help students pursue their dreams. I have done several jobs in my life but this one is by far the most rewarding. I just hope to be able to help out our students even more by serving on this committee."</p>

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Thomas, Dr. Joy

Associate Director of Financial Aid
Prairie View A&M University
Email: jdthomas@pvamu.edu

Term: 11/01/2019-10/31/2022

Dr. Thomas is interested in improving operational processes by utilizing technology and the use of unconventional resources to improve the efficiency of the financial aid process. Through the leadership of Dr. Thomas, Prairie View was able to commence the financial aid 2019-2020 awarding/packaging process earlier for both incoming and returning students. Dr. Thomas is involved in activities related to improving the overall student experience. Dr. Thomas volunteers her time to work with student associations to provide guidance and support to facilitate open communication with various constituents at Prairie View A&M University.

Trejo, Arnold

Executive Director of Financial Aid and Scholarships
University of Texas at San Antonio
Email: arnold.trejo@utsa.edu

Term: 11/01/2020-10/31/2023

With over 30 years in the profession, Mr. Trejo has worked in various leadership positions supporting student access and success, advocating for meaning financial aid policies and practices that fuel positive changes within the profession. Mr. Trejo has worked at a flagship, several mid-sized HSI campuses, and has had several business ventures - all of which have given him the breadth and depth of experience necessary to successfully lead dynamic teams focused on securing financial resources for studentsuccess.

Zavala, Gilbert

Vice President, Education and Talent Development
Austin Chamber of Commerce
Email: gzavala@austinchamber.com

Term: 11/1/2021 – 7/30/2024

As Vice President of Education & Talent Development at the Austin Chamber, Gilbert Zavala oversees our school district and higher education partnerships to execute the Chamber's education/talent strategies and has a strong focus on financial aid completion and financial aid policy at both the state and federal level. Gilbert leads efforts to ensure high school graduates in Austin MSA connect to finding for college through our annual FAFSA/Financial Aid Saturdays Campaign, engaging 300-400 volunteers from our business community, schools, colleges, and college access groups to help families complete FAFSA/TASFA forms in advance of the Texas priority aid deadline. Gilbert has also represented the Chamber on multiple state and national boards aligned with education/talent priorities. The U.S. Chamber of Commerce and the National Association of Chamber of Commerce Executives have both recognized and awarded Gilbert multiple fellowships based on this work to improve FAFSA completion and talent development/educational attainment for the region.

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE

FINANCIAL AID ADVISORY COMMITTEE
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Jase Kugiya

University of Texas at Austin

Email: jasekugiya@utexas.edu

Term: 06/01/2020 – 05/31/2022

Jase Kugiya was born and raised in Hawaii but has since experienced living in several states as well as extensive educational experience at several institutions during his postsecondary education. Mr. Kugiya is currently pursuing his Doctorate of Philosophy in Higher Educational Leadership at the University of Texas at Austin after receiving his Masters of Social Work from the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor. Mr. Kugiya received a Bachelor of Social Work with a minor in Sociology from Saint Martin's University in Lacey, WA.

Mr. Kugiya is interested in researching the issues driving the increasing costs of higher education and whether the return on investment for students is justifiable. In his own words "this topic is especially pertinent as we get closer to 2030. In a sense, the goals and outcomes of *60x30TX* are contingent on the accessibility and value of pursuing a postsecondary degree or credential for Texans."