

## 2009 TACTC Legislative Action Committee Work Plan and Outcomes

### **Legislative Action Committee:**

Membership on the Legislative Action Committee shall consist of one trustee from each college district. Trustees serving on the committee should have a solid understanding and experience in their trustee role, and be ready to take on the additional responsibility of being first point-of-contact for legislative advocacy for their board. Committee members will serve as liaisons to their local boards for trustee advocacy issues and serve as the advisory board to the executive committee.

**Action:** Develop work plan and timeline for the committee. Notify colleges of the work ahead so they may appoint the best trustee for the position.

### **Building the base of support:**

Leadership stemming from the Legislative Action Committee is the key to the success TACTC's legislative advocacy/action agenda. The committee must establish its purpose and make sure everyone knows what is expected of them over the year.

As part of their participation on the Legislative Action Committee, each trustee will be responsible for working with their local board to communicate with the local community, business leaders and political candidates about their local community and technical college and two-year college system.

Legislative Action Committee members are encouraged to attend all meetings, state conferences and national ACCT conferences.

### **Development of college system "Fact Sheets":**

Fact sheets will be developed to provide an "at-a-glance" overview of the college system for trustees to use in their advocacy efforts. Fact sheets are a great tool for communicating quickly about the mission areas, partnerships with the business community, community involvement, student demographics and funding issues. Fact sheets should include information about the economic impact of the college system on the local community.

**Action:** Produce fact sheets – focusing on national, statewide, and local college messages – as part of a "media kit" for trustees

## **Community Involvement & Advocacy Activities**

### **Support from Community Leaders:**

TACTC should continuously cultivate active community members who can serve as advocates on their behalf.

These community supporters (i.e. local economic development councils, chambers, business leaders, labor leaders, social service organizations, civic organizations, and senior citizens) should be regularly updated on the issues confronting the college

system and be alerted to opportunities to show support for their local college or the two-year college system.

**Action:** Have trustees identify which groups they either have connections to or would like to establish a relationship. Set goals for outreach (either written, meeting or presenting) to these groups this year.

### **Get on other organizations' agenda:**

Many organizations, especially local chambers, EDCs, and League of Women Voters, develop their own legislative priorities. Encourage them to make the local community or technical college a high priority in their legislative efforts. Offer to give presentations to your local League members about your college to ensure they understand the mission and issues facing the two-year college system.

Also, any organization that has a regular newsletter or legislative bulletin should receive year-round information about relevant college activities. Chambers, EDCs, the League and others are often eager to receive reliable information they can reprint in their newsletters.

**Action:** Contact local chambers of commerce, economic development councils, labor councils, Rotary, other educational organizations and other groups that would be interested in hearing presentations from colleges about college issues.

### **Maximize your community support:**

Chambers of commerce, labor councils, individual unions and economic development councils should be asked to make general endorsements of colleges. Business and labor leaders who participate in contract training or have other direct dealings with the colleges should be asked to go on record with testimonials and personal endorsements and to contact legislative candidates with those endorsements. Statements of support from current and former students, employers who hire college graduates, chambers of commerce and businesses that receive customized assistance are invaluable.

**Action:** Get public testimonials, endorsements and support from community leaders and organizations. Make sure all of the legislative candidates are exposed to the support.

## **Legislative Activities**

### **Build up your relationship with local legislators and public officials:**

Invite legislators, candidates and local officials to campus for regular visits. Familiarize them with your campus and programs, and introduce them to the issues facing higher education today. Personalize all the information you give them. Have students and community supporters there to help deliver your messages.

Also, remind them of your policy for using the college facilities for meetings and public forums. Encourage them to take advantage of the meeting space you have available.

Develop a working relationship with your local legislator. Let your legislators know you will be contacting them during the session. Be prepared to generate visible support within your community during the session.

**Action:** Continue to cultivate relationships with local government leaders by introducing them to the issues facing the two-year college system and higher education in this state during the interim.

**Action:** Determine which trustees have special relationships with local legislators and who can contact whom “in a pinch” during session.

## Media Activities

### Write letters to the editor or opinion columns in support of colleges' and two-year system agenda:

Individual trustees are encouraged to write letters to the editor using the local messages developed for your college. Work with your local public information officer to get opinion columns published in coordination with your college administration.

The TACTC Legislative Action Committee will serve as advisory group to the TACTC president and Legislative Action Committee co-chairs to write letters to the editor or opinion columns on behalf of TACTC for statewide publication.

### Schedule an editorial board:

Participate on editorial boards with your college president to talk about the innovative things your college is doing to support the local economy. Remind the public not to “starve the solution” during tough economic times.

## TACTC Legislative Action Committee

### Effective advocacy activities:

- **Legislative Action Committee:**
  - Mobilize TACTC Legislative Action Committee (meet quarterly)
  - Provide briefings to other trustees on local, state and national issues (local board meetings, conferences)
  - Develop Trustee “Media Kit” for advocacy resources
- **Community Involvement & Advocacy Activities:**
  - Use personal contacts and community affiliations to generate support for college priorities.
  - Make presentations to business, labor and civic groups.
  - Work to obtain formal statements of support from those organizations.

- **Legislative Activities:**
  - Build up your relationship with local legislators and public officials.
  - Contact legislators -- coordinate with the president's activities.
  - Contact legislators – at the direction of the Legislative Action Committee co-chairs to coordinate system-wide advocacy efforts.
  - Schedule college visitations for all legislators, public officials and candidates.
  
- **Media Activities:**
  - Write letters to the editor or opinion columns in support of colleges' agenda.
  - Participate on editorial boards with your college president.

## **How will we measure our success?**

### **Trustees – “Trustees in Action”:**

Trustees will report to TACTC Executive Committee on community activity and participation. Reports will be made available to full membership at TACTC conferences.

### **Community supporters – foundations, advisory committees, alumni:**

Supporters will:

- Receive regular updates of college legislative priorities.
- Offer endorsements and testimonials about the value of college programs in the community.
- Attend legislative town meetings, forums and debates to advocate for colleges.
- Write letters to the editor.
- Tell legislative candidates/officials to support two-year colleges.