

# TFA matters

SPRING 2022



**Texas Faculty Association:  
The challenges we share.**

## Meet your TFA State Board Members

Pat Heintzelman, President, Lamar University

Cary Wintz, Vice President, Texas Southern University

Suzanne Jones, Secretary/Treasurer, Texas Woman's University

Rebekah Bell, Immediate Past-President, El Paso Community College

Daniel Adams, Member-At-Large, Texas Southern University

Israel Aguilar, Member-At-Large, UT Rio Grande Valley

Rebecca Bell-Metereau, Member-At-Large, Texas State University

Michael Phillips, Member-At-Large, Collin College

Elizabeth Skerpan-Wheeler, Member-At-Large, Texas State University

VACANCY, Member-At-Large

VACANCY, Member-At-Large

## Contact TFA

Call: (409) 454-3701

Email: [TFA.President@texasfacultyassociation.org](mailto:TFA.President@texasfacultyassociation.org)

Facebook: [@TexasFacultyAssoc](https://www.facebook.com/TexasFacultyAssoc)

Twitter: [@TXFacultyAssoc](https://twitter.com/TXFacultyAssoc)

Blog: <https://texasfacultyassociation.blogspot.com/>

## President's Message

Working in Higher Education offers plenty of challenges. TFA wants to help. Certainly, COVID upended our lives for a long time, and now we face attacks from our own state legislature.

COVID numbers have started rising in the last weeks. In addition, more and more information is becoming available about potential long-term health effects. You can watch the numbers in your area by [setting up your own COVID watch](#).

The CDC reports that almost 81 million Americans have tested positive for COVID, and sadly, 990,367 of them have died. In efforts to help our members protect themselves and their students, TFA issued press releases directed toward the governor, I did many television and radio interviews, some TFA members participated in their university senates issuing resolutions supporting strong COVID measures, and some TFA members requested support from local city councils and health departments.

The TFA Board of Directors recently met with the leaders of AAUP and TACT to discuss Dan Patrick's attack on tenure in Texas. We brainstormed for ways we can work together to stop Patrick's threat to prohibit colleges and universities in Texas from offering tenure. Besides the obvious threat to the Texas economy by faculty and students making future choices to work in or to attend universities outside of Texas, large corporations could/will choose to stop moving to Texas. Many businesses choose to locate in Texas precisely because our state has so many good universities producing quality talent for these companies to hire.

Our lieutenant governor has also threatened to revoke tenure from faculty who teach Critical Race Theory. I have not yet heard of any school in Texas which requires this course for any degree. Students can choose to take CRT because they want to. We do not need to open the door of higher education to politicians deciding what educators can teach and what adult students can choose to study. We are working to block Patrick's efforts and will soon be in touch with the membership for ways you can help. We will schedule a membership-wide meeting this summer to meet with some Texas legislators to explain to them how seriously we take Dan Patrick's threats. We plan to contact influential corporations now located in Texas and ask for their support.

TFA is busy recruiting additional members around the state. Two Board members visited with UTRGV members this month to help organize and recruit. We already have our largest membership there, and the Board wants to help them organize an active chapter. Power comes from numbers. In March, I spoke to HELU, Higher Education Labor United, and they have agreed to be a conduit for Higher Ed educators outside Texas to support Texas faculty in our battle to protect tenure. They are a large organization and include many advocacy groups from across the country. I also spoke to the UT Austin AAUP on April 4 to explain why TFA membership is important to faculty. In addition, I spoke at the Texas Council of Faculty Senates on April 8 to share our goals and strategies and to solicit their support.

Suzanne Jones, Cary Wintz, and I, all Board officers, attended the Higher Education conference held in Baltimore, Maryland, in March. We created connections with many people whom we think can help us advance our goals. For example, I met Sue Clery who works for ASA-Research

and who analyzes the data universities submit which ultimately becomes the CUDAS (College and University Data Analysis System) data. CUDAS is NEA's online data tool that allows users to quickly produce reports for an institution and a group of peers. Data include faculty and staff salaries, a view into how institutions spend their money, and the changing streams of revenues, including appropriations compared to tuition. Sue's email is [scclery@asa-research.com](mailto:scclery@asa-research.com). As a member, you can contact her with questions regarding CUDAS information. We met so many NEA members from across the country, and we plan to meet with some of the Higher Ed leaders on a routine basis to share objectives, challenges, and strategies.

Collin College continues to non-renew faculty because they have exercised their first amendment rights. The latest casualty, Dr. Michael Phillips, as well as Dr. Suzanne Jones, both once officers of their local TFA chapter, are

represented by FIRE, Foundation for Individual Rights in Education. TFA wishes to thank FIRE for supporting these TFA members. Please visit the [FIRE website](#). Of interest, FIRE recently hosted training for writing public information and freedom of information requests. We will soon be posting some of this information on the TFA website.

If you do not have a personal email and phone number on file with TFA, please contact me (409-454-3701 or [tfa.president@texasfacultyassociation.org](mailto:tfa.president@texasfacultyassociation.org)) immediately with this information. Soon, Board members will begin making wellness calls to the membership. We will call you to see how you are doing and to see if you are facing any challenges we can help with.

Texas Monthly just issued their latest yearly College Guide. [Here is the link to the 2022 edition](#). Please review pages 22-25 because they offer valuable and interesting information

for how your university compares in specific areas to others in the state.

TFA purchased an organizational membership to NCHE, National Council for Higher Education, which allows us to keep better informed for what opportunities are available through NEA for us to meet strategic goals. There has been a growing perception that higher education has diminishing influence within the NEA. NCHE is the Higher Ed caucus of NEA members who advocate for programs and resources for Higher Ed. One of the goals of NCHE is to ensure NEA gains the prominence it should have as the primary national voice and advocate for higher education. We will send important updates from NCHE to the entire membership.

TFA is eager to hear of concerns or challenges you have.

In solidarity,

*Pat Heintzelman, Lamar University*

## FELLOWSHIP ANNOUNCEMENT

TFA launched the second year of member Fellowship Awards and the Local Chapter Recruitment Funds Award on September 1, 2021. The board set aside \$5,000 that can be used towards individual educational purposes or by members/chapters who need funds for membership recruitment. The following members have already been approved.

PROJECT 1 The Collin TFA chapter applied for \$500 funds to be used for a student scholarship in the name of deceased faculty member Iris Meda.

There are still funds left for nine Fellowships. [Please apply here](#).

## TEXAS LEGISLATURE UPDATE

We are working on hiring a new lobbyist for higher education.

[Here is a recap of the Texas Commission on Community College Finance](#)

We have formed a coalition with AFT, TSEU, TACT and TX AAUP — action items are: political outreach, talking and messaging to legislators, press release, CRTeach In, future rallies in Austin.

## REMINDERS

Our major challenge is connecting with our members who span the entire state. Please submit a personal email and/or physical address to TFA as soon as possible so you don't miss out on any information: [TFA@tsta.org](mailto:TFA@tsta.org).

## Actions of the TFA State Board since September 2021

### Press Releases:

[Faculty group: When will Collin College quit attacking the First Amendment?](#)

[Texas Faculty Association deplores Patrick's attacks on academic freedom](#)

[Texas Faculty Association supports Florida professors over their right to testify in voting case](#)

[Texas Faculty Association urges colleges and universities to delay re-openings during COVID surge](#)

Approved a budget for 2021-2022 which included new line items for: freelance writers, a full time lobbyist, more travel to institutions for recruitment, a solidarity fund, and a promotional membership discount.

We have continued the Fellowship and Recruitment funds award for members. There are still funds left. [Please apply here](#).

Started a TFA Twitter Account: [@TXFacultyAssoc](https://twitter.com/TXFacultyAssoc)

We created TFA Councils: Contingent Faculty Council, Solidarity Council, and Social Justice Council. Let us know if you would like to join one.

We joined HELU (Higher Education Labor

United) and financially helped to support their winter summit.

We sent three members to the NEA Higher Education Conference.

We are holding a Recruitment Blitz at Collin College. If you would like us to do this at your campus, please reach out.

We are working on extensive strategic planning.

We joined a statewide coalition with Texas AAUP, TACT, AFT, and TSEU to fight back against Dan Patrick's attack on higher education.

### Currently working on:

Reviewing membership lists and identifying potential chapters - large membership at UTRGV and Texas State University, contact us if you would like to start a local chapter.

Recording videos for grievance training and effective organizing techniques.

Hosting virtual workshops to discuss pressing issues in higher education. These are announced via email, Twitter, and on our website.

Sponsorships or advertising for TFA.

## NEXT MEMBER MEET-UP

TFA Fall Meeting - September 10 at 2-5 PM

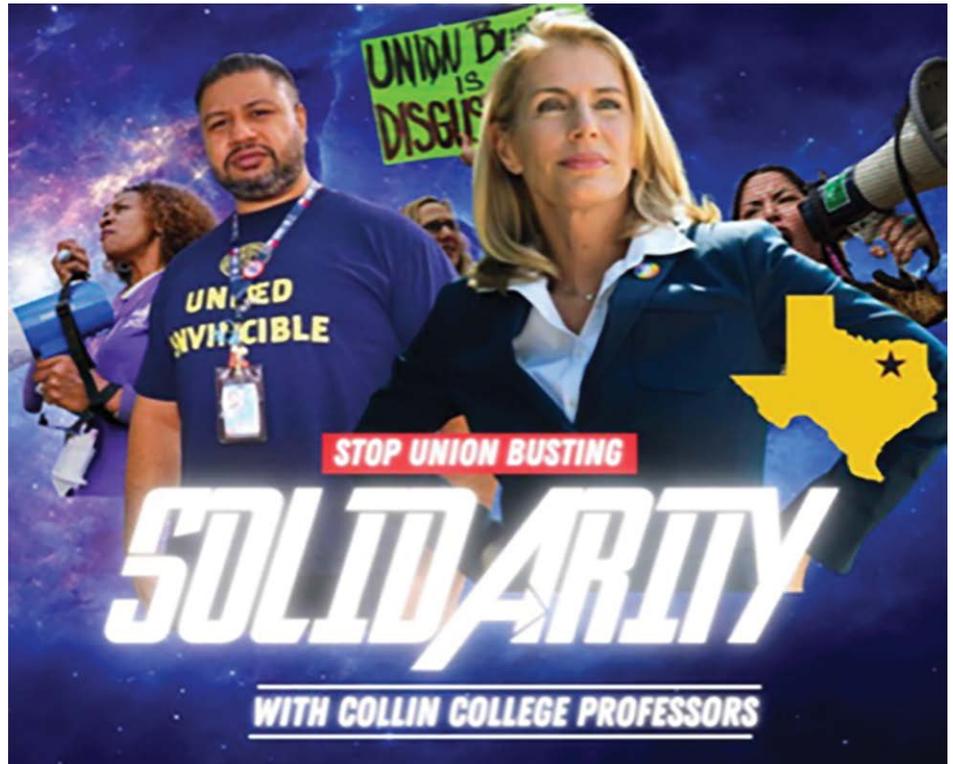
## MEET NEW BOARD MEMBER

Dr. Michael Phillips is a scholar of American race relations. Phillips earned his Ph.D. from the University of Texas at Austin in 2002. His dissertation won the University of Texas at Austin Outstanding Dissertation Award and was published as *White Metropolis: Race, Ethnicity and Religion in Dallas, 1841-2001*. That book won the 2007 Texas Historical Commission's prize for best book on Texas history.

In 2019 he was named one of the first group of community college professors to receive a Mellon/American Council of Learned Societies Community College research fellowship.

From 2007 until the end of the spring semester in 2022, Phillips taught history at Collin College in Plano, Texas. He was fired in the spring of 2022 for his exercise of free speech on matters ranging from Confederate monuments to wearing masks during the COVID pandemic.

He is currently suing Collin College for violating his First Amendment rights.



## ISSUES OF CONCERN / INTERESTS OF MEMBERS

[Please complete our survey.](#)

## MEMBER / CHAPTER NEWS

Collin College continues to attack our TFA members who happen to be local officers. If

you would like to read about the latest attack, here is an article from [FIRE.org](#). The Collin TFA chapter continues to persist in fighting back to protect their right to organize, free speech, and academic freedom. If you would like to view all the press on the attack at Collin College, you can view it on this [Link Tree](#).

# TFA Candidates for public office

## DR. ISRAEL AGUILAR HARLINGEN CISD SCHOOL BOARD, PLACE 7

Dr. Israel Aguilar is a professor at the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley where he teaches classes in school principal preparation and the doctoral program in educational leadership. Dr. Aguilar earned a Ph.D. in Education with a major in school improvement from Texas State University. In addition, he holds Texas educator certification for superintendent, for principal, and for classroom teacher. He has published multiple book chapters and peer-reviewed articles on school governance and leadership. In addition, he has presented his research at international, national, and state conferences.

For two years, Dr. Aguilar represented the United States as a visiting scholar in a

faculty exchange program hosted by the ministry of education in Colombia, South America. He currently serves as the Vice President on the Board of Directors for Harlingen Boy's and Girls Club and he is the 2022-2023 President for the Harlingen Sunburst Rotary Club. He also is a board member At-Large for the Texas Faculty Association, which is an affiliate of the Texas State Teachers Association and National Education Agency. In addition, he serves as a Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) volunteer for children who are abused or neglected in Cameron and Willacy County.

He and wife have three sons and are parishioners at St. Alban's Episcopal Church. Dr. Aguilar is running for school board in order to serve as a resource for the students, teachers, and parents of the

community. As an educational leader elected as a school board member of the Harlingen CISD Board of Trustees, Dr. Aguilar will advocate for fiscal responsibility, excellence in learning, and community representation in district decision-making.

## REBECCA BELL-METEREAU STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION, DISTRICT 5

Rebecca Bell-Metereau teaches film and English Texas State University, where she directs Media Studies Minor, which she developed. She got her BA, MA & PhD from Indiana University, and she and her husband served in 1973-75 in Peace Corps K-12, served as an interpreter for Air Force relief to Chad, Fulbright scholar Senegal, taught U. Nebraska.

She produced educational videos Children & Pregnant Women, Worth the Wait, and she has written 4 books, 16 chapters, 29 articles, 12 refs, 100+ papers.

She served as Special Assistant to the President, TXST, directed a Ford Foundation grant on diversity, media literacy, K-12 workshops.

She has received teaching and service awards, served as Faculty Senator, Texas Faculty Association board member.

She and her husband raised two daughters, and she volunteered at SCMISD, for interdisciplinarity, diversity, critical thinking, civics, research, Vocational Ed, art, and climate science teaching.

She serves on the Curriculum Committee on the State Board of Education, representing District 5, and she is running for this district in the November 2022 election.

This race is crucial if we want to keep public education in Texas from being completely taken over by outside charter school interests.

*Elect* **Dr.**  
**Israel**  
**Aguilar**

**Harlingen CISD School Board**  
Place 7

Endorsed by:  
Texas State Teacher's Association  
Harlingen CISD Local Chapter



**Early Voting**  
**April 25 - May 3, 2022**  
**Election Day: May 7, 2022**



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