



## IN THIS ISSUE

### New Plan, New Building, New Year

Happy New Year and welcome to the second issue of our newsletter!

In this issue, we'll share highlights of our work in support of the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, including:

- Convening the biggest Texas Higher Education Leadership Conference to date
- Supporting the Texas Commission on Community College Finance
- Raising over \$3 million to support THECB initiatives aimed at *Building a Talent Strong Texas*

We also moved to the new George H.W. Bush Building in the Capitol Complex, enabling closer collaboration with our partners across state government.

Looking ahead, we offer a glimpse into several THEF-supported initiatives kicking off in early 2023, including:

- Enhancing research commercialization and tech transfer in Texas
- Designing an Institutional Collaboration Center
- Developing region-specific labor market insight tools for institutions

We're grateful for your interest and partnership in our work!

Looking Back:

Highlights of 2022

Message from our

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A Preview of 2023

# Looking Back: 2022

## Message from our Executive Director

It's been a big year for the Texas Higher Education Foundation and our partner, the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board!

2022 began with the rollout of the state's new strategic plan for higher education, ***Building a Talent Strong Texas***. With its focus on improving educational attainment, increasing the production of postsecondary credentials of value, and bolstering research and development, the plan positions Texas as a national higher education leader. Broad excitement for the plan helped the Foundation raise over \$3 million this year, and we're excited to build on this momentum in 2023.



**Melissa Henderson**  
Executive Director, THEF  
Chief of Staff, THECB

Thanks to our partners, we supported several THECB initiatives, including the modernization of the state's education and workforce data infrastructure and the student-centered redesign of Texas' common college application. We also secured a federal grant to support research and development commercialization efforts and provided research and analysis support to the Texas Commission on Community College Finance, whose recommendations could drive generational change for Texas community colleges, students, and employers.

In 2022, we also supported major state and national convenings – the Postsecondary Employment Outcomes (PSEO) Summit and the Texas Higher Education Leadership Conference. The PSEO Summit brought together leaders from 22 states to collaboratively demonstrate higher education's economic and non-economic value through data. And, the Leadership Conference convened over 300 leaders from higher education, industry, and philanthropy to engage around topics ranging from the power of Texas-based research to propel industry to our state's leadership on the national stage as we tie credential attainment to value and much more.

2023 will also be action-packed as we work across education, philanthropy, and industry to achieve impact at scale, driving transformational change across the state by expanding opportunities for all Texans and fostering our global economic competitiveness. Partnering with the Foundation provides a unique opportunity to help drive this impact through combining public dollars with private investments and catalyzing initiatives that help meet the goals of ***Building a Talent Strong Texas***.

## Supporting THECB Priorities

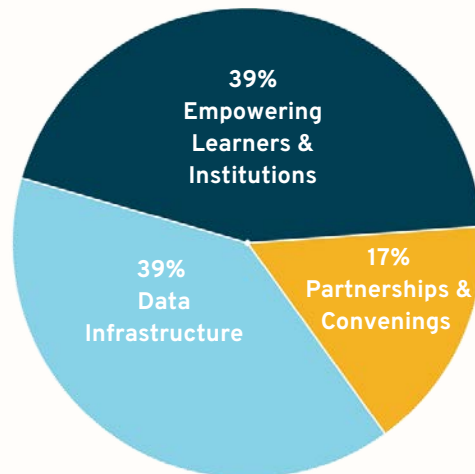
Under Commissioner Keller's leadership, the Foundation has raised over \$12 million to advance higher education in Texas.

In 2022, the approximately \$3 million raised supported:

- Partnerships and convenings such as the Texas Higher Education Leadership Conference
- Data Infrastructure investments to provide more timely and actionable insights to stakeholders
- Designing tools and processes that empower institutions and learners

We are immensely grateful for your partnership!

### 2022 Impact Summary



# Texas Higher Education Leadership Conference



The 2022 Texas Higher Education Leadership Conference was the most successful to date! The annual event had a record-breaking 300 attendees, and the Foundation raised over \$80,000 from our wonderful partners in the philanthropic and business communities to bring together a dynamic group of policymakers and leaders in higher education, industry, and philanthropy.

Discussions centered on credentials of value, higher education and the 88th Texas Legislative Session, philanthropy in higher education, Tri-Agency collaboration, and more. We also co-hosted a breakfast for business and industry leaders with the Texas Business Leadership Council, providing an opportunity for conversation with Commissioner Keller about the needs of employers.

Keynote speaker, U.S. Under Secretary of Education James Kvaal, applauded Texas for leading the way in its data modernization efforts, development of credentials of value, and focus on equity, making Texas a “state to watch” in higher education.

The event culminated with Commissioner Keller’s State of Higher Education address, where he highlighted the three core goals of ***Building a Talent Strong Texas*** and challenged attendees to commit to advancing these goals equitably and at scale.

Throughout the conference, there was one resounding theme: This is a pivotal moment for higher education and Texas is leading the way. Now is the time for leaders to strengthen Texas higher education so we can drive prosperity and competitiveness for decades to come.

We’re excited to host you all at the next Texas Higher Education Leadership Conference in December 2023!

“We have to achieve impact at scale  
- impact as big as Texas.”  
Commissioner Harrison Keller

[Read a full transcript](#) or [watch the video](#) of the Commissioner’s State of Higher Education address.



## Texas Commission on Community College Finance

**“Our Commission believes the new funding model must do three things: reward colleges for positive outcomes, especially in credential completion and transfer, ensure equitable access through financial aid, and help community colleges increase capacity to meet rapidly changing workforce needs.”**

**-Chairman Woody Hunt**

[Read the full report and recommendations to the 88th Texas Legislature](#)

The twelve-member Commission put forth recommendations that would position Texas as a national leader by focusing on community college outcomes, affordability, and investments in capacity. Through philanthropic partnership, THEF was able to support this work by engaging external partners to provide additional research, analysis and communications resources.



# Looking Ahead: 2023

## Strengthening Innovation Ecosystems in Texas

To support tech transfer and commercialization efforts at Texas institutions, THEF recently secured its first federal award, \$650,000 from the Economic Development Administration. The work will focus on understanding bottlenecks that stifle innovators within institutions and developing best practices to spur startup growth through tech transfer.

Texas has a tremendous higher education ecosystem, yet only three universities are regularly counted among the best globally. Our institutions are rich grounds for remarkable innovations. Vitamin D-fortified milk, life-saving vaccinations, and cancer treatments are among the thousands of inventions created through academic research. But having an idea – even a revolutionary one – isn't enough. Institutions need help advancing and translating discoveries into final products or services – and that is where the technology transfer process fits in.

### What is the Tech Transfer process?



Graphic adapted from autm.net

The research, development, and innovation goal of the strategic plan for higher education positions our state to lead the way in generating knowledge through basic and applied research, and translating discoveries into innovations that benefit individual Texans' lives and drive economic impact. However, knowledge produced on Texas campuses only results in economic value when supported by a robust ecosystem and strong tech transfer/commercialization practices. These research activities simultaneously drive the global economy, provide researchers with the support needed to advance their work, and offer Texas students with opportunities to work at the frontiers of human knowledge. This will ensure Texas is a leader in cutting-edge inventions, ranging from new software apps to medical treatments to green energy developed at Texas research universities for decades to come.

## What lies ahead...

Though only a month into the new year, we have already kicked off two new THEF-supported projects:



### Institutional Collaboration Center

Informed by feedback gathered through a listening tour with community college leaders across the state, the Center will help colleges, particularly small, medium, and rural-serving-access resources to grow their talent pipelines and meet community workforce needs.



### Labor Market Information (LMI) Tools

These decision-making tools will be designed to help institutions strategically invest limited resources into courses, institutional planning, and partnerships that yield positive labor market outcomes for students and respond to the needs of their local economy.

These projects are just the beginning of what promises to be an action-packed year. We look forward to what lies ahead!