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Contact Us

Web: www.tiec.org
E-mail: info@tiec.org

1103 West 24th Street
Austin, TX 78705

Phone: (512) 477-9283
Fax: (512) 322-0592

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University of Houston-Downtown Hosts Spring Operating Council Meeting

Representatives from ten Texas public universities across the state attended the biannual TIEC Operating Council meeting, hosted by University of Houston-Downtown (UHD) on May 15, 2015, to share information about their latest international programs and initiatives.

UHD President and current TIEC Board Chair Bill Flores welcomed the participants, noting the importance of ground-up involvement in fostering meaningful academic and cultural exchanges between campuses and the international community. "The international relationships we have, that are lasting ones, are often forged by our faculty and

their colleagues abroad," said Dr. Flores.

This sentiment was reflected in other discussions throughout the daylong meeting, with many of the university representatives indicating that faculty-led programs tend to be the most successful in garnering student interest in study abroad. As a result, several universities have been taking steps to support and encourage more faculty participation in study abroad programs.

Recruiting international students was another topic that received much attention. Current recruitment practices run the gamut from signing third-party agencies or



sending university representatives to local and overseas recruitment fairs to drawing students from local community colleges and relying on online resources.

Universities represented at the meeting included Lamar University, Prairie View A&M University, Texas A&M International University, Texas A&M University-Commerce, Texas A&M University-Kingsville, Texas Southern University, Texas Tech University, Texas Woman's University, The University of Texas of the Permian Basin, and University of Houston-Downtown.



Dr. Bill Flores (left) welcomes Operating Council participants to the UHD campus, with TIEC President Ronald Aqua looking on.

TIEC Welcomes New International Student Recruitment Coordinator for Its Intensive English Programs



Steven Ditto joined TIEC in April to coordinate enhanced student recruitment efforts at both TIEP in Austin and TIEP at Lamar, with a focus on building a stronger network of international education agencies. His background includes living and studying abroad in France, China, Jordan, and Russia, which led to a professional interest in promoting greater global interconnectedness and opportunity, in addition to policy research at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy.

"Education functions as a key to the world for many populations," Ditto explained. "The ability to help facilitate the international exchange of knowledge is what motivates me every day."

A native Austinite, Ditto earned a master's degree in international education from George Washington University in 2013.

Austin Music Scene Attracts Blues Guitarist as His English Language Learning Destination

TIEP student and blues guitarist Hiroki Shimizu came to Austin from Mie, Japan for two reasons: to learn English and to get involved in the Austin live music scene.

"I could get information in Japan from Internet websites, DVDs, or CDs. But here, I can see my hero, Jimmy Vaughn, live and in person," said Shimizu with a wide smile.

Austin is home to over 250 live music venues and is known for the variety of musical styles performed throughout the city, living up to its moniker of *Live Music Capital of the World*[®].

Since his arrival in Austin in January, Shimizu has played his guitar at several local music venues while attending TIEP classes. He explained that he



chose TIEP to study English because he plans to continue his studies at Austin Community College, which has an arrangement with TIEP to waive the official TOEFL score requirement for students who meet minimum grade requirements in their advanced TIEP English classes.

TIEP at Lamar students volunteer at the Southeast Texas Food Bank in Beaumont on June 13, 2015, accompanied by Student Services Administrator Ariel Barrett (center).



TIEP Well Represented at International TESOL Conference

Texas Intensive English Program (TIEP) instructors Nicole Furneisen, Angelique Pearson, and Jill Rolston-Yates, along with TIEP Academic Coordinator John Schmidt, joined over 5,600 other attendees from 92 countries at

the 2015 TESOL International Convention & English Language Expo held in Toronto, Canada, March 25-28.

"TESOL conferences provide opportunities to network with ESL professionals and to learn the

latest teaching trends, technologies, and research, which I have found helps me to improve my own classroom instruction," said Ms. Pearson. She and Ms. Rolston-Yates presented a poster session on incorporating art into ESL classrooms and shared proven lesson plans as well as pictures and sample artwork from their TIEP students.

Dr. Schmidt appeared on panels in several of the more than 1,000 academic events during the four-day convention, focusing on different facets of personal and professional development for ESL teachers. He also served as a 2015 Associate Program Chair and as Chair of the TESOL Convention Committee.

During the meeting, Dr. Schmidt was elected to the TESOL Board of Directors for a third term, having previously served in 2006-2009 and again in 2013-2014.



Jill Rolston-Yates in front of the poster presentation she shared with fellow TIEP instructor Angelique Pearson.

TIEP students and instructors complete a public art project at the HOPE Outdoor Gallery in Austin on May 1, 2015.

