

# Wits For Kicks

[Something Creative Here]



#TTFHigherEd  
September 20, 2014 · by Natalie Harms

September 2014						
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If you even come near my social media right now, you can tell I'm at the Texas Tribune Festival. I've only been to a couple higher ed panels thus

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far, but so far so good. Here are some observations:

“Closing the Gaps”

So, I got here late, but this was a topic on last year’s tribfest and it seems nothing has changed. Basically the topic is how to help first-generation and high-risk college students get into school, afford school and graduate. This obviously delved into a little bit of high school education, but mainly stuck to challenges minority students face when it comes to a college education.



**Natalie Harms** @nataliejharms 3h  
Leh go #tribunefest. Can't wait for some education and public policy. #thingsonlyisay



**Natalie Harms** @nataliejharms 

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Only about 17% of community college students who say they want baccalaureate degrees get them. - @JulietVGarcia #TTFhighered

9:06 AM - 20 Sep 2014

2 RETWEETS 2 FAVORITES



**Cara Michelle Smith** @Cara\_Smith5 

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"I never thought in my lifetime, I'd worry about men not going to school and women being the ones in college." -@JulietVGarcia #TTFhighered

8:51 AM - 20 Sep 2014

3 RETWEETS



**Natalie Harms** @nataliejharms 

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We need to layout our plans and benchmark. We can't hide our numbers. -- Woody Hunt #TTFhighered #tribunefest

9:13 AM - 20 Sep 2014

1 FAVORITE



TWEETEEER

- So much twitter action rn. The real reason I wanted to come to #tribunefest was to increase my followers. #jkjk 1 hour ago
- In summary, "The Completion Crisis" is not a crisis. But, we all could do better to provide support to students #TTFhighered 1 hour ago
- Attitudes and confidence of administrators toward high-risk students needs to change — Natalicio of UTEP #TTFhighered 1 hour ago

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**Cara Michelle Smith**

@Cara\_Smith5

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In TX, a 60 hr. associates program takes 90 hours to complete, and a 120 hr. baccalaureate program takes 147 hrs. to complete. #TTFhigherEd

9:23 AM - 20 Sep 2014

3 RETWEETS 2 FAVORITES

**Cara Michelle Smith**

@Cara\_Smith5

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"I happen to think it's immoral if you admit students that you don't think will graduate." -Raymund Paredes, TX Higher ed Commissioner

9:25 AM - 20 Sep 2014

4 RETWEETS 1 FAVORITE

**Cara Michelle Smith**

@Cara\_Smith5

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Former HS math teacher from Loyola, TX said some of her graduating students struggled writing one-page essays with punctuation. #TTFhigherEd

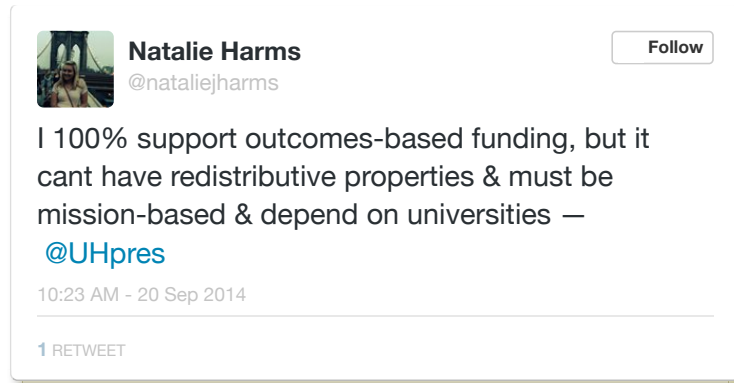
9:28 AM - 20 Sep 2014

2 RETWEETS

Panelists: UT-Brownsville President Juliet Garcia, TX Higher Ed Coordinating Board Chairman Woody Hunt, TX Higher Ed Commissioner Raymund Paredes, State Senator/Senate Higher Ed Committee Chairmen Kel Seliger, and A&M Chancellor John Sharp, with Tribune Reporter Reeve Hamilton.

### “The Completion Crisis”

OK, Texas Tribune... name your panels better. Literally every panelist said that crisis was a misnomer. Maybe it was just a little severe, because they all did admit a problem. The panelists skirted around a few issues, but talked A LOT about outcomes-based funding for universities and community colleges. UH President/Chancellor Renu Khator expressed her support of outcomes-based funding and explained that UH already has a system in place with different colleges and universities in the system.



So did UT President Bill Powers.



But, they both agreed—along with the rest of the panel—that every school is different and there is not a one-size-fits-all approach to it. Universities will experience push back and will suffer some loss.

The outcomes-based funding metrics and measures are also not fully appropriate for all universities, since everyone is different and has different missions. Plus, where the funding goes should depend on what the school is succeeding at. Khator explained that these things need to be involved when holding students and administrators accountable.

Powers mentioned that the metrics are not beneficial, but didn't provide his opinion on the best solution.

The other problem is, with state outcomes-based funding, that while this issue has been introduced, state funding has declined. This presents a bigger problem. There's not enough money it seems, to give to schools in general, let alone on an outcomes-based merit.



During the Q&A portion, the issue of student services arose. An audience

member explained how she sees students struggling to find the right advisers and the right classes, and are therefore struggling to graduate on time. UH has addressed this recently, trying to introduce block scheduling and better advisers, but it was Powers who jumped at the question.



Panelists: State Rep./House Higher Ed Committee Chairman Dan Branch, Khator, TX State Chancellor Brian McCall, UTEP President Diana Natalicio and Powers, with Hamilton as moderator.

In general, my first two panels have been great, but I am disappointed in the two panels for not talking about some of the bigger issues. Also, I think the responses to most of the questions were general and not saying anything ground breaking or innovative. What can ya expect.

ALSO, this happened...



but go Khator/Coogs!

Here's us:





BFFs.



My lil journos.

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