

# ACC nearly doubles its spending on compensation in response to rising cost of living

By **Becky Fogel** | KUT 90.5

(KUT) - The Austin Community College board of trustees unanimously approved a budget for fiscal year 2023 on Monday that includes nearly \$21 million for compensation, which is almost double what the college spent last year.

"Last year was, by far, our largest compensation package and it was just over \$11 million," said Neil Vickers, ACC's executive vice chancellor of finance and administration. "And we thought last year was an unprecedented increase in compensation."

The compensation package included in the new budget is ACC's largest yet.

The increases come as some ACC employees struggle with the rising cost of living amid the highest inflation rate in decades and skyrocketing housing prices. Vanessa Faz, who has worked at ACC for about 15 years, told the board she does not currently make enough to support herself and her daughter.

"The rising cost of food and gas has me

making decisions as to what we can eat and how much gas I will need for the week — not to mention my rent increase of \$300," she said.

ACC officials said the compensation package is geared to helping the lowest paid employees. Trustee Julie Ann Nitsch said it was important to keep them in mind while approving the budget.

"I'd like to also remind you, as a person who's lived in poverty, how incredibly expensive it is to be poor," she said. "That a traffic violation can turn into a suspended license, which can turn into jail time."

With concerns about affordability and employee retention front and center, trustees voted to increase the minimum wage for all employees from \$15.60 to \$20 per hour.

Originally, ACC officials had proposed raising the minimum wage for salaried staff to \$20 and \$18 for hourly workers. Trustee Sean Hassan said he did not understand the rationale for

offering hourly employees less.

"These folks are putting in labor, they're putting in their work, just like somebody who happens to be salaried," he said. "I just feel like we need to think about what's fair compensation for that work per hour."

Vickers said the proposal was simply about cost because raising the minimum wage to \$20 across the board would cost the college \$1 million. But, he assured the board ACC will be able to come up with the money from other parts of the budget.

The ACC board also signed off on raises for full-time and part-time employees, as well as for adjunct faculty.

Full-time salaried staff will get a 5% or \$5,000 raise, depending on which is greater for each individual. This works out to at least a 10% raise for employees making less than \$50,000. Staff making between \$50,000 to \$99,999 per year will get between a 5% to 10% raise. Individuals earning between \$100,000 and

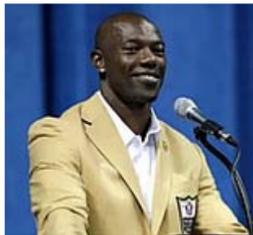


\$199,999 will get a 5% raise. However, employees making more than \$200,000 will get less than a 5% raise because trustees capped raises at \$10,000. That decision only affects a handful of employees at the college.

Many ACC employees will also receive a one-time stipend under the plan the board approved. Trustees decided to eliminate payments that college officials had proposed for staff making more than \$150,000 and lower the payments for those making between \$100,000 and \$149,000. Those savings were channeled into raising the one-time stipend for certain adjunct faculty from \$1,000 to \$1,200. Trustees also agreed the board needs to revisit the funding structure for adjunct faculty because they were concerned the raises were still not enough for this cohort of employees.

The new budget cycle starts Sept. 1.

## T.O. Wants To Play...For The Dallas Cowboys... Again.



**Terrell Owens**  
Mark Humphrey/AP/Shutterstock

FRISCO, TX - Terrell Owens believes he's the answer to Jerry Jones' wide receiver problem.

The Dallas Cowboys are in need of wideout help.

T.O. tweeted, "I'm ready," after it was reported wide receiver James Washington broke his foot in practice this week.

Owens is now 48-years old and is already inshrined in the Football Hall of Fame.

Owens' last game in the NFL was in 2010.

But over Owens' pro career, he earned six Pro Bowl berths in 15 NFL seasons. Over that time, he amassed 15,934 receiving yards, with 1,078 catches and 153 receiving touchdowns.

Acknowledging that he may not be that same guy now, Owens said, "Of course, everybody's skills at some point may decline, but I think there are certain people that kind of defy those odds, and I think I'm one of those people."

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**Fencing Project**

on Monday, August 8, 2022  
@ 2:00 p.m.

The total budget for this project is \$200,000.

Proposals may be submitted (by mail or hand carry) to: **Pflugerville ISD**  
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Pflugerville, TX 78660  
Attn: **Craig Pruett**

Proposals may be picked up in person or downloaded from the PflISD website at: [www.pfisd.net](http://www.pfisd.net).

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**Limestone Bollard Relocation Project**

on Monday, August 8, 2022  
@ 2:00 p.m.

Proposals may be submitted (by mail or hand carry) to:

**Pflugerville ISD**  
1401 West Pecan  
Pflugerville, TX 78660  
Attn: **Craig Pruett**

Proposals may be picked up in person or downloaded from the PflISD website at: [www.pfisd.net](http://www.pfisd.net).



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