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Finding our place: Supporting K12 education in rural Texas

OLC Accelerate
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Discovery Session with
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Background

- Texas A&M University-Central Texas is an upper-level and graduate university, focused primarily on teaching with a developing research agenda. Independent within the Texas A & M University System since 2009, it was independently accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools – Commission on Colleges in 2013.
- The Instructional Enhancement & Innovation Office (now the Faculty Center for Teaching & Learning) works with the Technology-Enhanced Learning department to provide consultation and support services aimed at improving and extending the teaching and learning experience at Texas A&M University-Central Texas through the use of state of the art technologies both in the classroom and beyond.
- The Technology Enhanced Learning department also provides specialized technology support for institution-sponsored events with our Central Texas community partners that foster the exemplary teaching, learning, and outreach goals of the university.
- This collaboration with the Texas Rural Education Association (TREA) further develops one of those important partnerships.

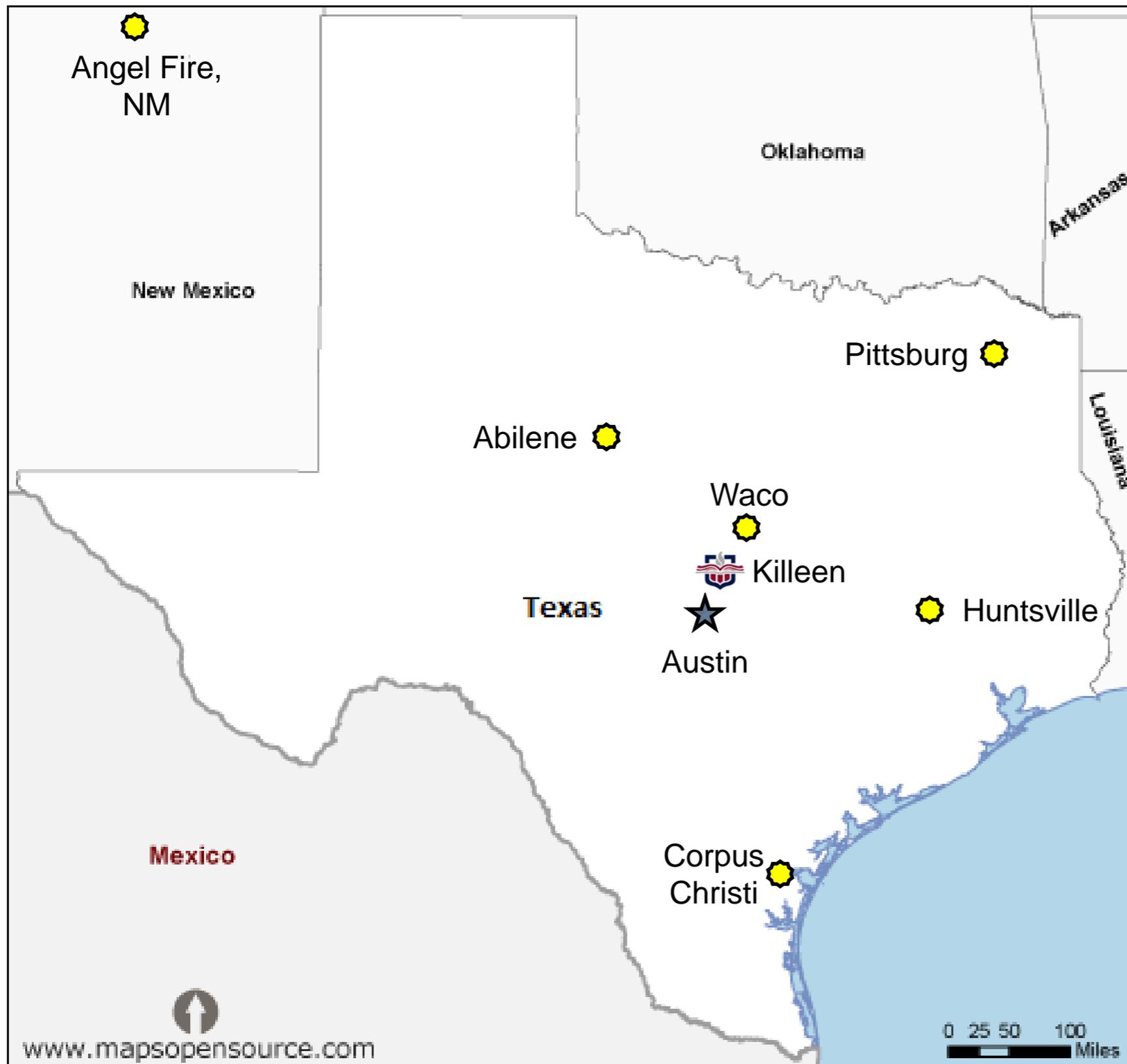
What were our goals?

We were approached in summer 2015 by the Texas Rural Education Association (TREA), and asked to do a presentation for member Superintendents and Principals at the fall Leadership Conference series, and to develop a professional development workshop for rural Texas teachers.

We wanted to be sure that we provided what TREA members needed:

- Further developing the skills to teach online and develop materials for online delivery – in whatever capacity their schools/districts identify
- Provide opportunities to explore new technologies and approaches to communicating with and engage students and parents
- Explore new methods for collaboration with students and fellow teachers
- Establish a clearinghouse for Technology-Enhanced Learning information

Road to Collaboration



Locations of Texas Rural Education Association (TREA) Leadership Series Meeting Presentations

Abilene, TX
Huntsville, TX
Pittsburg, TX
Waco, TX
Corpus Christi, TX
Angel Fire, NM (retreat)

The A&M-Central Texas Instructional Enhancement & Innovation Team spoke about collaboration possibilities at each TREA Leadership meeting

How can we collaborate?

We did not want to impose our perspective, so we needed to learn more about what the districts were already doing and how we could best serve their needs.

An anonymous survey, approved by the A&M-Central Texas IRB was shared via email with TREA members.

Survey Results: 91 participants (roughly 20-25 percent of recipients), mostly superintendents

Followed by a meeting with TREA leadership

Priority 1: Resource & Collaboration Portal

Priority 2: Grant Writing Assistance

Priority 3: Targeted Professional Development

Selected Results

A few significant results from the survey

- 100% felt that online learning opportunities are important; 44% felt they should be an important part of the academic improvement plan of their school or district
- Although only 35% were teaching online; 83% were augmenting classes with online components
- 95% felt they or the teachers in their districts would be interested in learning how to use new technologies for teaching and learning
- 89% felt they would be interested in learning to collaborate online with other teachers
- Open-ended responses revealed specific emphases on targeted professional development and an emphasis on quality. Examples:

“Quality PD that is not a waste of time”

“Correlate to TEKS”

“Professional development on how to use and incorporate with what they currently use and do”

“Integration of technology into daily lesson plans, familiarity, comfort using technology to reach more students”