

THE 2010-2015 MASTER PLAN FOR TENNESSEE HIGHER EDUCATION

DRAFT STATEMENT OF PLANNING GOALS AND ASSUMPTIONS

Higher education serves many stakeholder groups, and each brings its unique experience and perspective to the enterprise. Therefore, in crafting a statewide master plan for higher education, it is tempting to speak to as many of higher education's core values as possible. This often results in a narrative that is about everything and, therefore, in the end, about nothing.

Tennessee's context within the current economic environment dictates that the Steering Committee for the 2010-2015 Master Plan does not have that luxury. This Master Plan must be ***focused and practical***. Toward that end, the following statements are provided to enable the Committee to arrive at consensus about the primary focus and planning assumptions of the 2010-2015 Master Plan.

PLANNING GOALS

The main goals over the next planning cycle are to ***increase educational attainment*** within the state and to ***improve Tennessee's standing*** relative to other states. In relation to other states, educational attainment is generally measured as the percentage of working-age Tennesseans holding an associate's degree or higher. Gains are to be made primarily by ***improving productivity***, defined as increasing the numbers of students that complete postsecondary education and training with a degree or certificate. This must be done ***within available resources*** (primarily state appropriations and tuition revenue), with ***no decrease in quality***.

PLANNING ASSUMPTIONS

1. The ***Master Plan*** will be the primary policy direction-setting document for Tennessee higher education for the 2010-2015 planning cycle. The ***system strategic plans*** of the Board of Regents and University of Tennessee systems will reinforce and pursue Master Plan goals within the contexts of their respective systems. In turn, the system strategic plans will be operationalized by the ***strategic plans of individual institutions*** within each system.
2. As directed by the Complete College Tennessee Act, the Master Plan will:
 - address the state's ***economic development, workforce development and research*** needs;
 - ensure increased ***degree production*** within the state's capacity to support higher education; and
 - use ***institutional mission differentiation*** to realize statewide efficiencies through institutional collaboration and minimized redundancy in degree offerings, instructional locations and competitive research.

3. Increased degree production must be accompanied by the maintenance of **instructional quality**. The outcomes-based public higher education **funding formula** will be the mechanism by which the State pursues productivity, and the revised **Performance Funding** program will be the mechanism by which the State ensures quality.
4. A reality of the 2010-2015 planning cycle is that there will be no new state dollars with which to pursue quality enhancements. This will require efficiency and good stewardship of resources, reexamination of current tuition policy, fundraising in the private sector, and collaborations with local governments. The funding formula will not count extramural support against institutions in the performance-based allocation of state appropriations.
5. The 2010-2015 planning cycle constitutes the first time a comprehensive program of differentiated institutional missions has been put into place. Therefore, this is not a time to court (or fund) mission evolution. Institutions should seek to perform with as much as excellence as possible within their newly defined mission roles.
6. Since the market for doctoral programs is statewide (as opposed to local or regional), and given the new emphasis on mission distinctiveness, the State will be circumspect with regard to approving new doctoral programs that expand institutional mission.
7. An important piece in support of the Master Plan is a **supply-demand analysis** that highlights areas in greatest need of increased degree production relative to projected demand in the Tennessee labor market. While an institution may expand in non-need areas, within the confines of its defined mission, this must be done at the institution's own expense through the redirection of tuition, state, and private resources.
8. **Governance change is unnecessary** to pursue the goals of the Master Plan. Structure is a means to an end, and the plan is focused on the end goal of productivity enhancement. Tennessee can pursue its productivity goals within the structure. In fact, governance change can even be detrimental, if it causes people to focus on the organizational and resource needs of the new system and getting the structure "right" rather than addressing important state goals.
9. In summary, the Complete College Tennessee Act has outlined that the 2010-2015 Master Plan must address operational and academic efficiencies resulting in greater numbers of Tennesseans with degrees – in short, productivity. The role of the Steering Committee is to recommend a Master Plan that meets these legislated requirements and supports institutions in their individual missions. The Master Plan developed by the Steering Committee will connect the Complete College Tennessee Act, the outcomes-based formula, the quality assurance of Performance Funding, the Career- and College-Ready Policy Institute goals for Tennessee, and Race to the Top opportunities and obligations. The MP will be the primary higher education public policy document for the next five years, serving as a blueprint THEC, TBR, and UT.