



RICHARD G. RHODA
Executive Director

PHIL BREDESEN
Governor

STATE OF TENNESSEE
HIGHER EDUCATION COMMISSION
PARKWAY TOWERS, SUITE 1900
NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE 37243-0830
(615) 741-3605
FAX: (615) 741-6230
www.state.tn.us/thec/

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Christine Luce
615-741-7572
christine.luce@tn.gov

Tennessee Colleges Receive Funding to Serve Adult Students

NASHVILLE—July 1, 2010— The Tennessee Higher Education Commission announced funding today for six institutions that will participate in an Adult Student Initiative to help promote and expedite adult degree completion in the state. The institutions are funded through a four-year Lumina Productivity Grant Initiative awarded to the Commission.

The six institutions form two consortia and were selected on demonstrated success with adult students. Each consortium consists of a university, community college, and technology center. The Middle Tennessee Consortium includes Middle Tennessee State University, Motlow State Community College, and the Tennessee Technology Center at Murfreesboro; the West Tennessee Consortium comprises the University of Tennessee at Martin, Dyersburg State Community College, and the Tennessee Technology Center at Jackson.

Tennessee seeks to produce a cumulative additional 210,000 degrees (Associates and Bachelors) by 2025 to reach the national average for degree attainment. To achieve this goal, Tennessee needs to increase its degree productivity by three percent every year from now until 2025. Meeting this ambitious goal can only be achieved by reaching out to populations

-More-

previously underserved by Tennessee higher education, particularly adults, as well as increasing productivity with students currently enrolled. There are nearly two million Tennesseans age 25 and older with a high school diploma but no college degree.

“Improving education is about improving economic competitiveness and quality of life for individuals and communities,” said Richard Rhoda, executive director of THEC. “The Adult Student Initiative represents a first step in showing institutions and employers how to better serve this population that represents a vast untapped resource for Tennessee.”

Through the \$440,000 initiative, each consortium will implement policy and program changes targeted to adult students. The lessons learned will help institutions across the state and nation identify areas where program and policy changes will be most effective in removing the barriers that keep adult students from being successful on campus.

About the Tennessee Higher Education Commission

The Tennessee Higher Education Commission was created in 1967 by the Tennessee General Assembly (TCA 49-7-202) for the purpose of coordinating and supporting the efforts of post-secondary institutions in the State of Tennessee. One of its statutory requirements is to create a master plan for the development of public higher education in Tennessee. The mission for Tennessee's twenty-first century system of higher education is to elevate the overall educational attainment of citizens in the State through increased accessibility to mission-focused institutions, which deliver educational services on campus, as well as through a planned network of off-campus instruction and to prepare citizens responsibly for success in the new century by providing high quality teaching and research in an environment that serves the needs of its consumers.

About Lumina Foundation

Lumina Foundation for Education, an Indianapolis-based private foundation, strives to help people achieve their potential by expanding access to and success in education beyond high school. Through grants for research, innovation, communication and evaluation, as well as policy education and leadership development, Lumina Foundation addresses issues that affect access and educational attainment among all students, particularly underserved student groups such as minorities, first-generation college-goers, students from low-income families and working adults. The Foundation bases its mission on the belief that postsecondary education remains one of the most beneficial investments that individuals can make in themselves and that a society can make in its people.

About the Productivity Grant Initiative

The *Productivity Grant Initiative* is a multi-year initiative focused on increasing productivity within U.S. higher education, particularly at two- and four-year public colleges and universities. The aim is to use dollars invested by students, parents and taxpayers to graduate more students. The initiative, supported by Lumina Foundation for Education, relies on partner organizations working within various states to develop, promote and implement policies and practices that will help achieve this goal.

For more information, contact [Christine Luce](#), Tennessee Higher Education Commission at 615.741.7572 or visit www.tn.gov/moa.

###