

TENNESSEE HIGHER EDUCATION COMMISSION
MINUTES OF THE HBCU SUCCESS ADVISORY BOARD
Spring Meeting
April 21, 2021

Chairwoman Fallon Wilson called the meeting to order at 1:22 p.m.

Members	PRESENT	ABSENT
Mr. Spruell Driver	X	
Mrs. Laschinski Emerson	X	
Dr. Sharon Gentry		X
Ms. Sandra Long		X
Mr. Doug Magee	X	
Ms. Deidre Malone	X	
Mr. Damon Rawls		X
Commissioner Van Turner	X	
Dr. Fallon Wilson	X	
Ex-Officio Members	PRESENT	ABSENT
President Vernell Bennett-Fairs		X
President Logan Hampton	X	
President Forest Harris		X
President Vann Newkirk	X	
Interim President Leonard Adams	X	
President Glenda Glover		X
President James Hildreth		X

Other attendees: Dr. Emily House, THEC; Betty Dandridge Johnson, THEC; Dr. Jeffery Norfleet, THEC; Representative Antonio Parkinson, TN General Assembly

OPENING REMARKS

In Executive Order No. 51, Governor Bill Lee suspended Tennessee’s open meeting laws as necessary to allow a governing body to meet by electronic means and conduct essential business under certain conditions if the governing body “determines that meeting electronically is necessary to protect the health, safety, and welfare of Tennesseans in light of the COVID-19 outbreak.” The conditions are:

- Live access to the meeting by the public, if possible;

- No adjustment to existing quorum, meeting notice, or voting requirements;
- Clear notice to the public of the meeting agenda and how to access the meeting in a manner reasonably accessible to members of the public;
- Each part of the meeting subject to the Open Meetings Act must be audible to the public;
- Each member participating electronically must be able to simultaneously hear each other and speak to each other during the meeting;
- Any member participating electronically shall identify the persons present at the location from which the member is participating;
- Each member participating electronically must be provided, before the meeting, with any documents that will be discussed at the meeting, with substantially the same content as those documents actually presented;
- All votes taken during a meeting shall be by roll call vote; and
- Electronic participation allows a member to vote but does not make a member eligible for a per diem.

The Tennessee Higher Education Commission (THEC) has ensured that each of the required conditions have been met. For purposes of this meeting, we are using WebEx, which accommodates up to 1,000 participants. Advisory Board Members and THEC staff with items on today's agenda were given a link that allows them to participate in the meeting. All other attendees were given a link that allows them to watch the meeting, but not unmute themselves. However, attendees will be able to raise their hand during the meeting and be unmuted by the Host for participation, as needed. Notice of the meeting, agenda, materials, WebEx link for those participating via webinar, call-in number for those participating by phone only, and applicable codes were posted to the THEC/TSAC website and emailed to members of the Board last week. All votes will be by roll call and there have been no changes to existing quorum, meeting notice, or voting requirements. Each member has introduced themselves and listed all persons at their respective location. Lastly, members will be considered present for voting purposes but not for purposes of a per diem.

All conditions listed in Executive Order No.51 having been met, the only remaining item needed to ensure compliance with the Open Meetings Act and Executive Order No.51 is for the Board to determine that meeting electronically is necessary to protect the health, safety, and welfare of Tennesseans in light of the COVID-19 outbreak.

A motion was made by Spruell Driver and seconded by Dr. Doug Magee that it is necessary for the board to meet electronically to protect the health, safety, and welfare of

Tennesseans in light of the COVID-19 outbreak and to include the above comments in the minutes of the meeting.

A motion was made by Deidre Malone and seconded by Spruell Driver to adopt the agenda. The motion carried unanimously.

CHAIRWOMAN'S REPORT

Dr. Wilson welcomed board members and guests and thanked the presidents for providing steady leadership throughout the pandemic. She also announced a recent \$283 million in grants approved by the US Congress for technology access and broadband. Although final details have not yet been released, Dr. Wilson strongly recommended that all institutions prepare to apply.

REMARKS

Dr. Emily House, Executive Director of the Tennessee Higher Education Commission welcomed board members and provided an update on state higher education. Through surveys and interviews, THEC staff found that internet/technology access and mental health were the two main challenges for postsecondary students during the past year. Dr. House also shared the recent updates to the 2020 THEC Master Plan and reiterated the important role that Tennessee's HBCUs play in reaching the state's 55% attainment goal. Chairwoman Wilson asked about the possibility of support and assistance from THEC staff for HBCUs in applying for state and federal grants regarding broadband internet access. Dr. Wilson shared that is possible, and that there are many resources as well that could be made available to HBCUs. Mr. Leonard Adams, Interim President at Knoxville College asked if colleges that are not regionally accredited would be eligible to participate in such grant activities. Dr. House responded that there is definitely room for conversation on including Knoxville College. Chairwoman Wilson also reiterated the importance of campus collaboration to ensure all colleges and universities and students were being served.

Rep. Antonio Parkinson, Chair of the Tennessee Caucus of Black State Legislators shared an update on the legislative and budget agenda for the Black Caucus. This session, the group is focused on health, money, and education initiatives. They are requesting funding for several specific programs, including infrastructure and technology at HBCUs, closing the health care gap, encouraging minority students into law and health professions, and the creation of a mental health trust fund. The final budget has not been created, and the General Assembly is still working on a draft. Rep. Parkinson then shared that the Caucus drafted a resolution that acknowledges racism in public health, however it did not move

forward from committee. Despite this, the Black Caucus is committed to addressing and righting the wrongs of past injustice.

AGENDA ITEMS

I. Presidents' Reports

In the interest of time, and due to a low attendance, it was determined that the reports from each HBCU president could be shared at a different time.

II. 2020 HBCU Success Viewbook

Dr. Mosby shared the completed 2020 HBCU Success Viewbook and provided a brief overview of the document. The viewbook contains a description of HBCU Success at THEC, statewide data on HBCU enrollment, financial aid, and completion, and an individual profile of each institution. An online version of the viewbook is linked from the THEC homepage, and it is intended to be shared with a variety of stakeholders and constituents.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 2:12 p.m.