



## **AGENDA**

### **TENNESSEE HIGHER EDUCATION COMMISSION**

#### **Spring Quarterly Meeting**

**Paul Rogers Board Room - Ezell Center, Lipscomb University**

**May 15, 2025, 9:00 a.m. CDT**

#### **Call to Order**

#### **Adoption of Agenda**

#### **Public Comment**

**Approval of Minutes:** February 7, 2025, Winter Quarterly Meeting; March 19, 2025, Special Called Meeting

#### **Chair's Report**

**Institution Report:** President Candice McQueen, Lipscomb University

**Executive Director's Report:** Vets Initiatives and Master Plan Update

#### **Consent Calendar**

- I. Postsecondary State Authorization (*Action Item*)
  - A. Authorization of New Institution
  - B. Optional Expedited Authorization
- II. Off-Campus Locations (*Action Item*)
  - A. University of Tennessee, Knoxville – Oak Ridge Enhanced Technology & Training Center
  - B. Motlow State Community College – Upper Cumberland Regional Airport

#### **Regular Calendar**

- I. New Academic Programs (*Action Item*)
  - A. Roane State Community College - Speech Language Pathology Assistant, Associate of Applied Science (AAS)
  - B. Tennessee Technological University - Agriscience Technology, Master of Science (MS)
  - C. Tennessee Technological University - Child Life, Master of Science (MS)
  - D. Tennessee Technological University - Interdisciplinary Computing, Bachelor of Science (BS)
  - E. University of Tennessee Knoxville - Retail, Hospitality, and Tourism Management, Master of Science (MS)
  - F. University of Tennessee, Martin - Social Work, Master of Science (MSSW)
  - G. University of Tennessee, Knoxville - Sustainability, Master of Science (MS)
  - H. University of Tennessee, Knoxville - Communication and Information, Bachelor of Science (BS)

- II. Legislative Update (*Information Item*)
- III. Academic Policy Revision: Academic Policy A1.4: Off-Campus Instruction (*Action Item*)
- IV. Financial Policy Revision: Financial Policy F1.0: Capital Projects (*Action Item*)
- V. Tennessee Student Assistance Corporation Overview (*Information Item*)
- VI. Tennessee State University Update (*Information Item*)
- VII. Other Business



## AGENDA

**Access, Academics, and Student Success Committee**  
**Paul Rogers Board Room - Ezell Center, Lipscomb University**  
**May 14, 2025, 1:00 p.m. CDT**

**Committee Members: Chairwoman Whitney Allmon, Tre Hargett, Sara Morrison, Gadson W. Perry, Mike Ragsdale, Tara Scarlett, and Charles Wood**

### Call to Order

### Adoption of Agenda

### Public Comment

**Approval of Minutes:** February 6, 2024, Meeting

### Executive Director's Report

### Regular Calendar

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- I. Postsecondary Education Authorization (*Action Item*)
  - CCI.A. A. Authorization of New Institution
  - CCI.B. B. Optional Expedited Authorization
- II. Off-Campus Locations (*Action Item*)
  - CCII.A. A. University of Tennessee, Knoxville – Oak Ridge Enhanced Technology & Training Center
  - CCII.B. B. Motlow State Community College – Upper Cumberland Regional Airport
- III. New Academic Programs (*Action Item*)
  - RCI.A. A. Roane State Community College - Speech Language Pathology Assistant, Associate of Applied Science (AAS)
  - RCI.B. B. Tennessee Technological University - Agriscience Technology, Master of Science (MS)
  - RCI.C. C. Tennessee Technological University - Child Life, Master of Science (MS)
  - RCI.D. D. Tennessee Technological University - Interdisciplinary Computing, Bachelor of Science (BS)
  - RCI.E. E. University of Tennessee Knoxville - Retail, Hospitality, and Tourism Management, Master of Science (MS)
  - RCI.F. F. University of Tennessee, Martin- Social Work, Master of Science (MSSW)
  - RCI.G. G. University of Tennessee, Knoxville - Sustainability, Master of Science (MS)
  - RCI.H. H. University of Tennessee, Knoxville - Communication and Information, Bachelor of Science (BS)

- RCIII.
  - IV. Academic Policy Revision: Academic Policy A1.4: Off-Campus Instruction (*Action Item*)
  - V. Other Business

# TENNESSEE HIGHER EDUCATION COMMISSION

## Access, Academics, and Student Success Committee

Minutes of the Access, Academics, and Student Success Committee

Nashville Room, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor William Snodgrass TN Tower

312 Rosa L. Parks Blvd.

Nashville, TN 37243

February 6, 2025

Commissioner Ragsdale called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m.

Member	PRESENT	ABSENT
Chairwoman Whitney Allmon	X	
Commissioner Will Perry	X	
Commissioner Mike Ragsdale	X	
Commissioner Tara Scarlett	X	
Commissioner Charles Wood	X	
Secretary Tre Hargett	X	
Nathan James, Designee for Commissioner Sara Morrison	X	

At the start of the meeting there were four (4) members physically present and one (1) member participating virtually. Commissioner Perry arrived at the meeting at 1:07 p.m.

### Adoption of Agenda

Commissioner Wood made a motion to adopt the agenda. Commissioner Scarlett seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion passed unanimously.

### Public Comment

There were no public comments.

### Approval of Minutes: November 6, 2024, Committee Meeting

Commissioner Wood made a motion to adopt the minutes. Secretary Hargett seconded the motion. A voice vote was taken, and the motion passed unanimously.

### AGENDA ITEMS

#### I. Postsecondary Education Authorization (*Action Item*)

Commissioner Wood stated that if there was no objection the Committee would vote on the items as a set. Dr. Stephanie Bellard-Chase, Senior Director of Postsecondary State Authorization, provided an overview of the authorizations of new institutions and the optional expedited authorizations.

Commissioner Scarlett made a motion to approve the Postsecondary Education

Authorizations. Commissioner Wood seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion passed unanimously.

## **II. New Academic Programs (*Action Item*)**

Dr. Katherine Brackett, Senior Director of Academic Affairs, provided an overview of the three programs from Middle Tennessee State University (MTSU) and introduced Dr. Amy Aldridge, Vice Provost for Academic Affairs at MTSU.

### **A. Middle Tennessee State University – Biomedical Sciences, Master of Science (MS)**

Dr. Aldridge provided an overview of the Biomedical Sciences, Master of Science degree which is the only non-thesis option in the State and can be completed in ten (10) months. This degree prepares graduates to be more successful in admission to health programs and enter the workforce in areas such as clinical research, pharmaceutical sales, and medical testing at an advanced level.

Commissioner Scarlett made a motion to approve the Biomedical Sciences, Master of Science degree program. Secretary Hargett seconded the motion. A roll call vote was made, and the motion passed unanimously.

### **B. Middle Tennessee State University – Digital Media, Master of Science (MS)**

Dr. Aldridge provided an overview of the Digital Media, Master of Science degree which is available online and prepares graduates for producing, editing, and designing media.

Committee members asked questions and a discussion was held.

Secretary Hargett made a motion to approve the Digital Media, Master of Science degree program. Commissioner Scarlett seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion passed unanimously.

### **C. Middle Tennessee State University – Legal Studies, Master of Science (MS)**

Dr. Aldridge provided an overview of the Legal Studies, Master of Science degree which focuses on anti-money laundering, fraud and compliance, business law, and entertainment. This program is in collaboration with Nashville School of Law, but graduates will not be able to practice law. This degree program is designed to have graduates work in areas such as compliance officer, risk management, and analytics.

Committee members asked questions and a discussion was held. Commissioner James asked for additional information about the badge system at MTSU.

Secretary Hargett made a motion to approve the Legal Studies, Master of Science degree program. Commissioner Scarlett seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion passed with five (5) ayes, and one (1) nay by Commissioner Perry.

**III. Key Performance Indicators via County Profiles (*Information Only*)**

Ms. Paige Elliott, Senior Director of Research and Strategy, provided an overview of the County Profiles that are produced annually at the beginning of the legislative session. Ms. Elliott gave an overview of Davidson County including the community education snapshot, in-demand occupations within the county, and the number of recipients for Tennessee Education Lottery Scholarship.

Committee members asked questions and a discussion was held.

**IV. Other Business**

There was no other business discussed.

**Next Meeting**

May 2025

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**Chairwoman Whitney Allmon**



## **AGENDA**

### **Finance and Operations Committee**

**Paul Rogers Board Room - Ezell Center, Lipscomb University**

**May 14, 2025, 3:00 p.m. CDT**

**Committee Members: Chairman David Lillard, Skyler Brackett, Jimmy Matlock, Jason Mumpower, John Rader, Robert Smith, and Vernon Stafford**

#### **Call to Order**

#### **Adoption of Agenda**

#### **Public Comment**

**Approval of Minutes:** February 6, 2024, Meeting

#### **Executive Director's Report**

#### **Regular Calendar**

Binder

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- RCIV.      I.      Financial Policy Revision: Financial Policy F1.0: Capital Projects (*Action Item*)
- II.      2025 Outcomes-Based Funding Formula Review (*Information Item*)
- III.     2025 Quality Assurance Funding Review (*Information Item*)
- IV.     Binding Tuition Authority Updates (*Information Item*)
- V.      Lottery Revenue Update (*Information Item*)
- VI.     Other Business



**TENNESSEE HIGHER EDUCATION COMMISSION**  
**Minutes of the Finance and Operations Committee**

Nashville Room, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor William Snodgrass TN Tower

312 Rosa L. Parks Ave.

Nashville, TN

February 6, 2025

Treasurer Lillard called the meeting to order at 2:11 p.m.

<b>Member</b>	<b>PRESENT</b>	<b>ABSENT</b>
Chairman David H. Lillard, Jr.	<b>X</b>	
Commissioner Jimmy Matlock	<b>X</b>	
Comptroller Jason Mumpower		<b>X</b>
Commissioner John Rader	<b>X</b>	
Commissioner Vernon Stafford, Jr.	<b>X</b>	

At the start of the meeting there were four (4) voting members physically present.

**Adoption of Agenda**

Commissioner Matlock made a motion to approve the agenda. Commissioner Rader seconded the motion. A voice vote was taken, and the motion passed unanimously.

**Public Comment**

There were no public comments.

**Approval of Minutes: November 6, 2024, Meeting**

Commissioner Stafford requested that the minutes be amended to include, “Commissioner Stafford directed THEC staff to consider alterations to the tuition model to better reflect the vast differences in the needs of the institutions. Treasurer Lillard agreed.”

Treasurer Lillard made a motion to approve the minutes as amended. Commissioner Stafford seconded the motion. A voice vote was taken, and the motion passed unanimously.

**I. Transmission of FY2024-25 Revised Operating Budgets (*Action Item*)**

Mr. Russell VanZomeren, Senior Director of Fiscal Policy, provided an overview of the 2024-25 Revised Operating Budgets, which included information on tuition revenue, expenditures, discount rates, and appropriations.

Committee members asked questions, and a discussion was held.

Treasurer Lillard made a motion to amend the Transmission of FY2024-25 Revised Operating Budgets to include the following language:

“The Tennessee Higher Education Commission has reviewed the FY2024-25 Operating Budgets. The Commission expects that all operating budget data submitted are accurate, that all public institutions of higher education operate within their approved budgets, and that all public institutions of higher education maintain revenues and reserves sufficient to cover annual expenses. Furthermore, the Commission underscores the importance of adhering to the budget provisions outlined in Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 9, Chapter 4, and the appropriations bill.”

Commissioner Matlock seconded the motion. A voice vote was taken, and the motion passed unanimously.

**II. Other Business (*Action Item*)**

Dr. Steven Gentile, Executive Director, gave two updates. First, the Commission will need to have a special called meeting to set binding tuition and fees ranges, and staff will be providing more information on the tuition model following directives from commission members. Second, Dr. Julie Roberts and the facilities team are working on analyzing the role of research in the capital process.

Treasurer Lillard made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Stafford seconded the motion. A voice vote was taken, and the motion passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 2:48 p.m.

**NEXT FINANCE AND OPERATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING:**

May 2025

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**Chairman David H. Lillard, Jr.**



# TENNESSEE HIGHER EDUCATION COMMISSION

## Finance and Operations Committee

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### REGULAR CALENDAR ITEM: II.

**MEETING DATE:** May 14, 2025  
**SUBJECT:** 2025 Outcomes-Based Funding Formula Review  
**ITEM TYPE:** Information

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#### BACKGROUND

Per Tenn. Code Ann. § 49-7-202(g), the Commission is statutorily required to establish and annually convene a review committee to aid in the development or revision of the Outcomes-Based Funding (OBF) formula. After consulting the Statutory Review Committee, the body charged with developing and revising the state's higher education master plan and OBF formula, THEC staff then develop formal recommendations to amend or revise the formula to the Commission, which votes on all recommendations.

THEC staff evaluate the formula in consultation with the Review Committee on an annual basis to provide a technical review, or an opportunity to ensure that all formula mechanisms are working as designed. To allow for stability, clarity, and ability to respond to formula incentives, Tennessee makes major policy revisions to the OBF formula no more than once every five years. THEC staff, in consultation with the Review Committee, will begin the five-year policy review later this year following the completion of the master plan. This process provides a space for the Commission, state and elected officials, institutional representatives, and THEC staff to evaluate and recommend policy revisions to align the formula with the state goals outlined in the higher education master plan.

In preparation for the five-year OBF review process, THEC staff will present information on the current state of the OBF formula followed by a conversation on potential policy revisions in the upcoming review cycle. During this time and throughout the review process, THEC staff will record feedback for future consideration on policy changes the commission may like to see considered during the 2025 formula review.

Information on the current metrics in Tennessee's OBF formula can be found in the materials attached.

## Outcomes Based Funding Formula Overview

The Complete College Tennessee Act (2010) requires Tennessee public community colleges and universities to be funded on outcomes like student progression and completion. The Tennessee Higher Education Commission and Review Committee developed a formula that funds institutions through outcome metrics that reflect institutional priorities and mission. THEC uses a **three-year average** of the outcomes listed below to limit potential volatility in the formula year over year.

### Outcomes

<u>Community Colleges</u>	<u>Universities</u>
Students Accumulating 12 hours	Students Accumulating 30 hours
Students Accumulating 24 hours	Students Accumulating 60 hours
Students Accumulating 36 hours	Students Accumulating 90 hours
Associate Degrees	Bachelor's and Associate Degrees
Long-Term Certificates	Masters/Ed. Specialist Degrees
Short-Term Certificates	Doctoral/Law Degrees
Dual Enrollment	Research, Service, and Sponsored Programs
Job Placements	Six-year Graduation Rate
Transfers out with 12 hours	Degrees per 100 FTE
Workforce Training/Contact Hours	
Awards per 100 FTE	

Outcomes are **weighted** to align with institutional priorities and mission, totaling 100 percent for each institution. Moving away from the common weight structure used in the previous model, the 2020-2025 model uses a banded weight structure for the community college sector that prioritizes completion metrics while allowing individual colleges to better reflect missions. The formula also includes premiums for **focus populations** for student progression and undergraduate awards to encourage completion at public institutions.

### Focus Populations

<u>Community Colleges</u>	<u>Universities</u>	<u>Premiums</u>
Adult	Adult	1 Focus Population = 80% = 1.8 Outcomes
Low-Income	Low-Income	2 Focus Populations = 100% = 2 Outcomes
Academically Underprepared	High-Need Fields*	3 Focus Populations = 120% = 2.2 Outcomes
High-Need Fields		4 Focus Populations = 140% = 2.4 Outcomes

\*Applied to undergraduate awards only.

**How It Works:** Universities and community colleges compete for a **share** of available state appropriations each year. They do this through improvement in their outcomes relative to peers. Data are counted and **scaled** and compared to previous outcome levels. An institution's increase or decrease in outcome production is assessed compared to peer increases or decreases in outcome production. That movement influences that institution's share of state appropriations. For example, if all institutions experienced net improvement in outcomes, institutions that experienced the *greatest* growth would increase their share of total funding the most.



The funding formula also includes an assessment of institutional quality and programmatic support via the **Quality Assurance Funding** (QAF) score. Institutions may earn up to an additional 5.45% of funding based upon metrics such as licensure pass rates and accreditation. The formula also includes values for institutional **fixed costs** intended to ensure institutions receive adequate funds to maintain the operation of their physical infrastructure.

<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Simplified Definition</b>
Student Progression	The number of undergraduate students reaching 30, 60, or 90 credit hours at universities or 12, 24, or 36 credit hours at community colleges during an academic year.
Short-Term (<1 Year) Certificates	The total number of technical certificates requiring fewer than 24 credit hours granted during a calendar year.
Long-Term (1 - 2 Year) Certificates	The total number of long-term certificates (excluding those in the general education core) conferred in an academic year.
Bachelor's Degree	The total number of bachelor's degrees conferred in an academic year.
Associate Degrees	The total number of associate's degrees conferred in an academic year.
Master's And Education Specialist's Degrees	The total number of master's and education specialist's degrees and certificates conferred in an academic year.
Doctoral And Law Degrees	The total number of Doctoral and Law degrees conferred in an academic year.
Graduation Rate	The six-year university graduation rate of first-time, full-time freshmen.
Awards/Degrees Per FTE	The total number of associate and bachelor's degrees at universities, or long-term certificates and associates at community colleges, in an academic year per 100 undergraduate FTE.
Research, Service, And Sponsored Training	Expenditures derived from external sources for research, public service, and sponsored program activities at a university.
Dual Enrollment	The number (unduplicated headcount) of high school students taking degree-credit courses in an academic year.
Transfers Out	The number of undergraduate students who, after accumulating 12 credit hours, successfully transferred to another institution in an academic year.
Job Placement	The number of graduates employed full-time in the year following graduation from a community college.
Workforce Training	The number of eligible non-credit workforce training hours completed in an academic year at a community college.
<b>Focus Population</b>	<b>Simplified Definition</b>
Adult	Students 25 years or older at the time the outcome is achieved. Used only for the progression metrics and undergraduate awards.
Academically Under-Prepared	Any student who scores below certain thresholds on the ACT and any student who is ever identified by the community college as requiring a remedial or development course. Used only for the progression metrics and the undergraduate awards at community colleges.
Low-Income	Students identified as Pell-eligible at any time during their college career. Used only for the progression and undergraduate awards.
Workforce Investment	Students who receive an undergraduate award in an approved high-need academic field in a given academic year. Used for undergraduate awards only.



# TENNESSEE HIGHER EDUCATION COMMISSION

## Finance and Operations Committee

### REGULAR CALENDAR ITEM: III.

**MEETING DATE:** May 14, 2025  
**SUBJECT:** 2025 Quality Assurance Funding Review  
**ITEM TYPE:** Information

#### BACKGROUND

Over 40 years ago, Tennessee was the first state to utilize quality metrics in state higher education funding. Over the years, Quality Assurance Funding (QAF) has evolved and incentivizes public colleges and universities to measure student learning and institutional effectiveness as part of the continuous improvement process. In the current 2020-2025 QAF standards, institutions may earn an additional 5.45% over operating budgets based on performance on metrics particular to their sector and aligned to the Tennessee Higher Education Master Plan.

QAF standards are evaluated every five years to ensure alignment with state higher education priorities. In order to develop new standards, THEC staff collaborate with institutional and system-level stakeholders via a steering committee. The steering committee provides recommendations on possible metrics and scoring mechanisms which inform the next five years of standards.

The QAF review of the 2025-2030 standards is already underway. Beginning in fall 2024, THEC staff have been working with campus-level QAF coordinators and other stakeholders along with the 2025-2030 steering committee, whose members are listed in the below table. THEC staff will present information on previous iterations of QAF, provide a synopsis of input received from the steering committee and other stakeholders, and record any input and feedback the committee has.

#### 2025-2030 QUALITY ASSURANCE FUNDING STEERING COMMITTEE

Name	Title	Institution
Charlise Anderson	Managing Executive Director of Institutional Effectiveness, Research, Planning, and Assessment	Tennessee State University
Colton Cockrum	Senior Associate Vice Provost of Institutional Effectiveness, Accreditation, and Academic Assessment	University of Memphis
Mary Hoffschwelle	Vice Provost for Planning and Effectiveness and SACSCOC Accreditation Liaison	Middle Tennessee State University
Linda Martin	Interim Chancellor	University of Tennessee, Southern
Matt Matthews	Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs	University of Tennessee System
Michael McFall	Director of Academic Assessment	University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Phil Oldham	President	Tennessee Technological University
Carol Rothstein	President	Jackson State Community College
John Squires	Vice President of Economic and Community Development	Cleveland State Community College
Chris Tingle	Assistant Vice Chancellor of Data Strategy	Tennessee Board of Regents



# TENNESSEE HIGHER EDUCATION COMMISSION

## Finance and Operations Committee

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### REGULAR CALENDAR ITEM: IV.

**MEETING DATE:** May 14, 2025  
**SUBJECT:** Binding Tuition Authority Updates  
**ITEM TYPE:** Information

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### BACKGROUND

Since 2010, the Complete College Tennessee Act has required THEC to make tuition and fee recommendations. The FOCUS Act expanded THEC's authority on tuition and fee levels, requiring that the Commission issue binding tuition and fee ranges each year. These ranges apply only to resident, undergraduate students on the tuition rate and total tuition and mandatory fees.

Public Chapter 186 of the 114<sup>th</sup> General Assembly amended Tenn. Code Ann. §49-7-202(n), THEC's tuition and fee authority, to allow the Commission to approve separate maximum increases for one or more public institutions of higher education if the Commission determines that it is necessary based on the circumstances or needs of the respective institution.

THEC staff will present information on the binding tuition and fee changes within Tenn. Code Ann. §49-7-202(n), followed by a conversation on operationalizing the new binding maximum increase authority. During this time and throughout the implementation process, THEC staff welcome input and feedback that the commission may like to see considered regarding the binding tuition and mandatory fee process.





# TENNESSEE HIGHER EDUCATION COMMISSION

## Finance and Operations Committee

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**REGULAR CALENDAR ITEM: V.**

**MEETING DATE:** May 14, 2025  
**SUBJECT:** Lottery Revenue Update  
**ITEM TYPE:** Information

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### **BACKGROUND**

A representative from the Student Aid & Compliance Bureau will provide an overview of the Tennessee Lottery Revenue collection through the first three quarters of FY2025.

## TENNESSEE HIGHER EDUCATION COMMISSION

### Minutes of the Winter Quarterly Commission Meeting

3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, TN Tower

312 Rosa L. Parks Ave.

Nashville, TN 37243

February 7, 2025

Chairwoman Scarlett called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. CST.

Member	PRESENT	ABSENT
Chairwoman Tara Scarlett	X	
Commissioner Whitney Allmon		X
Commissioner Skylar Brackett	X	
Commissioner Jimmy Matlock	X	
Commissioner Will Perry	X	
Commissioner John Rader	X	
Commissioner Mike Ragsdale	X	
Commissioner Robert Smith	X	
Commissioner Vernon Stafford, Jr.	X	
Commissioner Charles Wood	X	
Secretary Tre Hargett	X	
Treasurer David H. Lillard, Jr.	X	
Commissioner Sara Morrison	X	
Comptroller Jason Mumpower	X	

At the start of the meeting there were 12 voting members physically present and one member electronically present, constituting a quorum.

#### Adoption of Agenda

Chairwoman Scarlett asked the Commission to consider amending the agenda to move the Transmission of FY2024-25 Operating Budgets from the consent calendar to the regular calendar.

Commissioner Matlock made a motion to adopt the agenda as amended. Commissioner Ragsdale seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion passed unanimously.

#### Public Comments

Dr. Steven Gentile, Executive Director, stated that a public comment by Mr. Peter Maher was received and circulated to all Commission members ahead of the meeting and would be included in the minutes. The public comment is transcribed below:

TO: Tennessee Higher Education Commission

FROM: Peter Maher

RE: Public Comment for February 7, 2025 (Winter Quarterly Meeting) / Approved Minutes Inclusion

DATE: February 4, 2025

Today's agenda action Item includes a New Academic Program for a Middle Tennessee State University (MTSU) – Legal Studies, Master of Science (MS) program. Entertainment is one of the four recommended curriculum concentrations (for the MTSU Legal Studies, Master of Science program).

According to The Free Speech Center at Middle Tennessee State University, the Free Speech Center's focus is our community's high schoolers. In this current State of Tennessee taxpayer funded and public higher education program (focused on our community's high schoolers), MTSU already uses limited taxpayer resources to post, publish, and promote content specific to Entertainment legal topics. For example, this MTSU high schooler focused program posts, publishes, and promotes Entertainment issues including Adult Entertainment legal access issues, Adult Entertainment advocacy groups, and information (and an article) for an Adult Entertainment lawyer/legal association. Several examples of these State of Tennessee public higher education, taxpayer funded high schooler focused posts and promotions date to 2009. Several were recently updated (in 2024).

1. Our Tennessee Higher Education Commission needs to double check and clarify exactly what kind of Entertainment legal studies Middle Tennessee State University is planning to implement or offer. THEC needs to clarify age groups for which this Entertainment Legal Studies program (can or can't) recruit or instruct.
2. Should THEC provide approval for MTSU to teach (any form of Entertainment legal studies) to our community's high schoolers, then THEC should require MTSU Entertainment legal studies instructors earn a passing score on any related Entertainment (adult or otherwise) curriculum content assessments in our state's current Tennessee Department of Education Educational Testing Services K-12 Praxis Series. (link below to MTSU's Praxis Series Curriculum Content Testing Center).
3. As a result of MTSU's intentions for this Legal Studies program to be delivered in a Majority Online (Hybrid) learning environment, then THEC should require proper age requirements, safeguards, and parental or guardian permissions be in place.
4. Perhaps our THEC might also consider (or inquire about) a related and future New Academic Program concentration in First Amendment legal studies. Our state's public higher education institutions have, and are, eliminating those legal study curriculums.

Thank you for your service, time, help, and ear.

Respectfully,  
Peter Maher

#### **Approval of Minutes: November 6, 2024, Fall Quarterly Meeting**

Commissioner Stafford made a motion to approve the November 6, 2024, Fall Quarterly Meeting Minutes. Commissioner Wood seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion passed unanimously.

### **Chair's Report**

Chairwoman Scarlett delivered the Chair's Report. She emphasized the Commission's impact on the lives of first generation and rural college students. Chairwoman Scarlett spoke on the Master Plan development and aligning education with workforce needs.

### **Institution Report**

Dr. Sidney McPhee, President of Middle Tennessee State University, provided an institution report stating that MTSU is career-focused and business-centric. The institution prides itself on staying innovative with coursework offerings that align with student interest and business support.

### **Executive Director's Report**

Dr. Steven Gentile, Executive Director, recognized the college and university presidents in attendance and introduced three new staff members. Dr. Gentile spoke about the upcoming budget hearings, legislative session, and the importance of the new Master Plan bringing together all presidents and stakeholders across the state to bridge the intersection of workforce needs and education. Dr. Gentile then proposed two Special Called Meetings: one in March to vote on binding tuition ranges and one in July to approve new academic programs.

### **Consent Calendar**

Commissioner Stafford made a motion to approve the consent calendar. Commissioner Brackett seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion passed unanimously.

### **Regular Calendar I**

#### **I. Transmission of the FY2024-25 Revised Operating Budgets (*Action Item*)**

Treasurer Lillard, Chair of the Finance and Operations Committee, provided an overview of the Transmission of the FY2024-25 Revised Operating Budgets which included amending the Revised Operating Budgets by adding the following language, which was read by Mr. Scott Sloan, Chief Operating Officer and General Counsel:

"The Tennessee Higher Education Commission has reviewed the FY2024-25 Operating Budgets. The Commission expects that all operating budget data submitted are accurate, that all public institutions of higher education operate within their approved budgets, and that all public institutions of higher education maintain revenues and reserves sufficient to cover annual expenses. Furthermore, the Commission underscores the importance of adhering to the budget provisions outlined in Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 9, Chapter 4, and the appropriations bill."

Commission members asked questions, and a discussion was held.

Treasurer Lillard made a motion to approve the amended Transmission of the FY2024-25 Revised Operating State Budgets. Chairwoman Scarlett seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion passed unanimously.

#### **II. New Academic Programs (*Action Item*)**

Commissioner Ragsdale provided an overview of the three new academic programs offered by Middle Tennessee State University. Commissioner Ragsdale stated that the Access, Academics, and

Student Success Committee passed two of the programs unanimously, but the Legal Studies program passed with five ayes and one nay after much discussion.

Commission members then voted on each program separately.

**A. Middle Tennessee State University- Biomedical Sciences, Master of Science (MS)**

Commissioner Ragsdale made a motion to approve the Biomedical Sciences, Master of Science degree program. Secretary Hargett seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion passed unanimously.

**B. Middle Tennessee State University, Digital Media, Master of Science (MS)**

Secretary Hargett made a motion to approve the Digital Media, Master of Science program. Commissioner Stafford seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion passed unanimously.

**C. Middle Tennessee State University, Legal Studies, Master of Science (MS)**

Commissioner Ragsdale made a motion to approve the Legal Studies, Master of Science program. Secretary Hargett seconded the motion. The floor was opened to discussion.

Commission members asked questions, and a discussion was held. Dr. Amy Aldridge, Vice Provost for Academic Affairs at MTSU, responded to the Commission members' questions.

Commissioner Ragsdale withdrew his motion for approval. Commissioner Ragsdale then made a motion to defer the decision of this academic program until the next commission meeting. Chairwoman Scarlett seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion passed unanimously.

**III. Committee Appointment (Action Item)**

Chairwoman Scarlett made a motion to appoint Commissioner Smith to the Finance and Operations Committee. Secretary Hargett seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion passed unanimously.

**IV. Update on 2025 Master Plan (Information Item)**

Ms. Amanda Klafehn, Chief Strategy Officer, provided an overview of the Master Plan, including statutory authority, the planning process, and what the Commission can expect from THEC staff during the process.

Commission members asked questions, and a discussion was held.

**V. Student Success Initiatives (Information Item)**

Mr. Brett Gipson, Chief Access Officer, provided an overview of Student Success Initiatives and introduced Dr. Celeste K. Carruthers, William F. Fox Distinguished Professor of Labor Economics at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville Boyd Center for Business and Economic Research. Dr. Carruthers gave an overview of the Navigate Reconnect 2024 Annual Report.

Mr. Gipson then introduced Dr. Russ Deaton, Executive Vice Chancellor for Policy and Strategy at the Tennessee Board of Regents. Dr. Deaton provided an overview of how TBR is connecting Labor

Market outcomes to provide innovative student success programs such as TN Coaching Project, Corequisite Support, and Reimagining the Community College Experience. Dr. Deaton then introduced Dr. Amy Moreland, Vice Chancellor of Policy and Strategy at TBR. Dr. Moreland provided information on the Coaching Project, which works with underprepared students within their first year of their college experience. Commission members asked questions, and a discussion was held.

Mr. Gipson then introduced Ms. Krissy DeAlejandro, President and CEO of tnAchieves. Ms. DeAlejandro provided an overview of tnAchieves, including their Summer Bridge and Summer Institute programs. Ms. DeAlejandro also provided information on pilot programs with Knox County which includes Advance865, Knox Access, job shadowing, and initiatives to increase the number of students that transfer from a community college to a four-year institution. Commission members asked questions, and a discussion was held.

**VI. Recent College Athletics Change Overview** *(Information Item)*

Dr. Gentile introduced Mr. Gerald Harrison, Vice President and Director of Athletics at Austin Peay State University. Mr. Harrison provided a legal overview and discussed potential impacts on Title IX and university business offices. Commission members asked questions, and a discussion was held.

**VII. Capital Process Formula** *(Information Item)*

Mr. Paul Marshall, Senior Director of Facilities Planning and Preparedness, provided an overview of the current capital process formula and the proposed formula model that would make the capital process more predictable.

**VIII. Other Business**

Commissioner Smith spoke on the uncertainty of the status of the Department of Education and availability of Tennessee lottery funds. Commissioner Smith requested that THEC monitor institutional viability and re-evaluate the previous viability study.

Chairwoman Scarlett asked if any presidents wanted to speak on their institutions. Comptroller Mumpower called on Dr. Dwayne Tucker, Interim President of Tennessee State University. Dr. Gentile informed Comptroller Mumpower that President Tucker had to step away for another engagement.

Comptroller Mumpower then called on Dr. Brian Noland, President of East Tennessee State University, to speak on the current environment of ETSU. Dr. Noland provided an update on how Hurricane Helene affected students and staff.

Chairwoman Scarlett adjourned the meeting at 12:47 p.m.

**NEXT THEC COMMISSION MEETING:**

Thursday, May 15, 2025, in Nashville, TN.

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**THEC Chairwoman Tara Scarlett**

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**THEC Secretary Whitney Allmon**

## TENNESSEE HIGHER EDUCATION COMMISSION

### Minutes of the March Special Called Commission Meeting

Virtual Meeting

March 19, 2025

Link to Recording: [THEC Special Called Commission Meeting --3.19.2025](#)

Chairwoman Scarlett called the meeting to order at 1:06 p.m. CST.

Member	PRESENT	ABSENT
Chairwoman Tara Scarlett	X	
Commissioner Whitney Allmon		X
Commissioner Skylar Brackett	X	
Commissioner Jimmy Matlock	X	
Commissioner Will Perry	X	
Commissioner John Rader	X	
Commissioner Mike Ragsdale	X	
Commissioner Robert Smith	X	
Commissioner Vernon Stafford, Jr.	X	
Commissioner Charles Wood	X	
Secretary Tre Hargett	X	
Treasurer David H. Lillard, Jr.	X	
Nathan James, Designee for Commissioner Sara Morrison	X	
Comptroller Jason Mumpower	X	

At the start of the meeting there were 12 voting members participating virtually, constituting a quorum.

#### Statement of Necessity

Board Secretary, Ms. Rachel Hitt, read the following Statement of Necessity:

"Commission Members,

A quorum of members are participating electronically today. As such, Tenn. Code Ann. § 8-44-108(b)(2), requires that the commission make a determination that a necessity exists in order for a quorum of members to participate by electronic or other means of communication.

A "necessity" means that the matters to be considered by a public body at a meeting require timely action by the body, that physical presence by a quorum of the members is not practical within the period of time requiring action, and that participation by a quorum of the members by electronic or other means of communication is necessary.

In this case, two facts support a determination of necessity:

- First, today's agenda items require timely action by this commission to approve binding tuition and fees ranges and consider an academic program with an anticipated start date of May 2025 to ensure the cohesive higher education enterprise of Tennessee.
- Second, scheduling conflicts and other commitments prevented a quorum of members from being physically present today."

Commissioner Stafford made a motion to approve the necessity. Commissioner Perry seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion passed unanimously.

### **Adoption of Agenda**

Chairwoman Scarlett asked the Commission to consider amending the agenda to allow for Middle Tennessee State University's (MTSU) new academic program to be considered first and the binding tuition and fees ranges to be second.

Commissioner Stafford made a motion to approve the agenda as amended. Commissioner Perry seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion passed unanimously.

### **Public Comments**

Dr. Steven Gentile, Executive Director, stated there were no public comments.

### **Regular Calendar I**

#### **I. New Academic Program: Middle Tennessee State University – Legal Studies, Master of Science (Action Item)**

Dr. Julie Roberts, Chief Academic Officer, introduced Dr. Amy Aldridge, Vice Provost for Academic Affairs at MTSU.

Dr. Aldridge provided an overview of the Master of Science Legal Studies program and its partnership with the Nashville School of Law. William J. Koch, Jr., Dean of Nashville School of Law, provided information on the partnership with MTSU and how it will help students better understand how lawyers and the legal system work.

Commission members asked questions, and a discussion was held.

Commissioner Stafford made a motion to approve the Master of Science Legal Studies program at MTSU. Commissioner Rader seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion passed unanimously.

#### **II. FY2025-26 Binding Tuition and Fees Ranges (Action Item)**

Mr. Russell VanZomeran, Senior Director of Fiscal Policy, provided an overview of the FY2025-26 Binding Tuition and Fees Ranges with a staff recommendation of 0 to 5.5%.

Commission members asked questions, and a discussion was held. Commissioner Mumpower requested that the Commission hear how the Presidents respond to the tuition range at a future meeting.



Comptroller Mumpower made a motion to approve Binding Tuition and Fees Ranges from 0 to 6.5%. Commission members asked questions, and a discussion was held. Commissioner Ragsdale seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion passed with 7 ayes and 5 nays from Chairwoman Scarlett, Commissioner Matlock, Commissioner Rader, Commissioner Smith, and Treasurer Lillard.

### **III. Other Business**

Chairwoman Scarlett stated that the next meeting will be in May, and she looks forward to hearing from Tennessee State University on its vision moving forward with the new Binding Tuition and Fees Ranges.

Comptroller Mumpower stated that he looks forward to hearing from each university on how they plan to use this range responsibly for their institution.

Chairwoman Scarlett adjourned the meeting at 2:25 p.m.

### **NEXT THEC COMMISSION MEETING:**

Thursday, May 15, 2025, in Nashville, TN.

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**THEC Chairwoman Tara Scarlett**

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**THEC Secretary Whitney Allmon**



# TENNESSEE HIGHER EDUCATION COMMISSION

**CONSENT CALENDAR ITEM: I.A.**

**MEETING DATE:** May 15, 2025  
**SUBJECT:** Postsecondary State Authorization  
Authorization of New Institutions  
**ITEM TYPE:** Action

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## BACKGROUND

The Commission, under the Tennessee Higher Education Authorization Act of 2016, as amended, has the “power and duty” to act upon applications for authorization of postsecondary educational institutions. For the institutions listed below, applications have been reviewed, site visits have been performed, and staff has determined that all necessary documentation and bonds have been secured. In accordance with Rule 1540-01-02-.07(2)(d), the Executive Director granted these institutions provisional initial authorization subject to review and ratification by the Commission. These institutions are being recommended for Regular Authorization.

**A. Professional Driving Academy Nashville LLC Nashville, TN**

3530 West Hamilton Ave, Nashville, Tennessee 37218

**Corporate Structure:** Limited Liability Company (LLC)  
**Accreditation:** None  
**Title IV Funding:** No

Professional Driving Academy Nashville LLC is seeking to register two new programs. The programs will be offered in a residential format. Instruction will be provided by the faculty from their authorized location in Nashville, Tennessee.

- 1. Program:** Class A Commercial Driver's License Training  
**Credential Awarded:** Certificate of Completion  
**Length of Program:** 160 Contact Hours  
1 Month  
  
**License/Certification Required for Employment:** CDL-A  
**Licensing Board/Agency:** Tennessee Department of Safety and Homeland Security
- 2. Program:** Class B with Passenger Endorsement Commercial Driver's License Training  
**Credential Awarded:** Certificate of Completion  
**Length of Program:** 160 Contact Hours  
1 Month  
  
**License/Certification Required for Employment:** CDL-B  
**Licensing Board/Agency:** Tennessee Department of Safety and Homeland Security

**B. Success Barber College Memphis, TN**

1642 E. Shelby Drive, Memphis, Tennessee 38116

**Corporate Structure:** Limited Liability Company (LLC)  
**Accreditation:** National Accrediting Commission of Career Arts & Sciences

(NACCAS)

**Title IV Funding:**

Yes

Success Barber College is seeking to register one new program. The program will be offered in a residential format. Instruction will be provided by the faculty from their authorized location in Memphis, Tennessee.

1. **Program:** Barbering  
**Credential Awarded:** Certificate of Completion  
**Length of Program:** 1500 Contact Hours  
9 Months Full-Time  
12 Months Part-Time

**License/Certification Required for Employment:** Barber Technician

**Licensing Board/Agency:** Tennessee Board of Cosmetology and Barber Examiners

**C. Tech Impact** **Nashville, TN**

500 Interstate Blvd, South, Suite 210, Nashville, Tennessee 37210

**Corporate Structure:** Not-for-Profit Corporation

**Accreditation:** None

**Title IV Funding:** No

Tech Impact is seeking to register one new program. The program will be offered in a residential format. Instruction will be provided by the faculty from their authorized location in Nashville, Tennessee.

1. **Program:** ITWorks  
**Credential Awarded:** Cisco IT Essentials  
**Length of Program:** 400 Contact Hours  
4 Months



# TENNESSEE HIGHER EDUCATION COMMISSION

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**CONSENT CALENDAR ITEM: I.B.**

**MEETING DATE:** May 15, 2025  
**SUBJECT:** Postsecondary State Authorization  
Optional Expedited Authorization  
**ITEM TYPE:** Action

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## BACKGROUND

The Commission, under the Tennessee Higher Education Authorization Act of 2016, as amended, has the “power and duty” to act upon applications for authorization of postsecondary educational institutions. For the institutions listed below, applications have been reviewed and staff has determined that all necessary documentation and bonds have been secured. In accordance with Rule 1540-01-02-.07(2)(d), the Executive Director granted these institutions provisional optional expedited authorization subject to review and ratification by the Commission. These institutions are being recommended for Optional Expedited Authorization.

## OPTIONAL EXPEDITED AUTHORIZATION LOCATIONS (2)

- |    |   |                 |
|----|---|-----------------|
| 1. | Herzing University - Clarksville                  | Clarksville, TN |
| 2. | Southern California University of Health Sciences | Tempe, AZ       |



# TENNESSEE HIGHER EDUCATION COMMISSION

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**CONSENT CALENDAR ITEM: II.A.**

**MEETING DATE:** May 15, 2025

**SUBJECT:** Off-Campus Location Center  
University of Tennessee, Knoxville  
Oak Ridge Enhanced Technology and Training Center

**ITEM TYPE:** Action

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## BACKGROUND

Pursuant to Tenn. Code Ann. § 49-7-202(q)(3), THEC is to review and approve or disapprove all proposals for off-campus locations at public institutions. Additionally, per THEC Policy A1.4A Off-Campus Instruction for Community Colleges and Universities, an off-campus center is defined as a location that is geographically apart from the main campus where students can enroll and complete academic programs and there must be a continuing administrative presence, evidenced by at least one full-time or part-time administrator housed on-site.

The University of Tennessee, Knoxville (UTK) requests a center code for the Oak Ridge Enhanced Technology and Training Center located at 3607 Oak Ridge Turnpike, Oakridge, TN 37830, to be effective June 2, 2025. The proposed center will provide programming for Oak Ridge employees to allow them to earn a Master of Science degree in Industrial Engineering. Students will be enrolled in as a cohort, and UTK projects 31 students in academic year 2025-26 with an increase to 38 students in five years. UTK will use existing full-time faculty to provide instruction, and two full-time faculty will provide an administrative presence including advising and other support as needed for program implementation.



# TENNESSEE HIGHER EDUCATION COMMISSION

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**CONSENT CALENDAR ITEM: II.B.**

**MEETING DATE:** May 15, 2025

**SUBJECT:** Off-Campus Location Center  
Motlow State Community College  
Upper Cumberland Regional Airport

**ITEM TYPE:** Action

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## BACKGROUND

Pursuant to Tenn. Code Ann. § 49-7-202(q)(3), the Tennessee Higher Education Commission is to review and approve or disapprove all proposals for off-campus locations at public institutions. Additionally, per THEC Policy A1.4A Off-Campus Instruction for Community Colleges and Universities, an off-campus center is defined as a location that is geographically apart from the main campus where students can enroll and complete at least one academic program and there must be a continuing administrative presence, evidenced by at least one full-time or part-time administrator housed on-site.

Motlow State Community College (MSCC) requests a center code for the Upper Cumberland Regional Airport located at 750 Airport Road, Sparta, TN 38583-5239 to be effective June 1, 2025. The proposed center will allow students to complete certificate programs in Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) and Advanced Emergency Medical Technician (AEMT). These programs are some of MSCC's fastest growing programs and are critical to the meeting the need for emergency medical technicians throughout MSCC's 11 county service area. The Upper Cumberland Regional Airport has signed a memorandum of understanding with MSCC to provide two classrooms to house both the EMT and AEMT certificate programs which is close to the MSCC Sparta location. The director of the program will have an office on-site to provide part-time supervisions and there will be one full-time faculty member located at the proposed center and up to four adjunct faculty will be available depending on demand. MSCC projects an initial enrollment of 12 students in year one and then leveling off to 20 students in the subsequent semesters.



# TENNESSEE HIGHER EDUCATION COMMISSION

REGULAR CALENDAR ITEM: I.A.

**MEETING DATE:** May 15, 2025

**SUBJECT:** New Academic Program  
Roane State Community College  
Speech-Language Pathology Assistant, Associate of Applied Science (AAS)

**ITEM TYPE:** Action

## PROGRAM OVERVIEW

<b>Title and Designation</b>	Speech-Language Pathology Assistant, Associate of Applied Science (AAS)
<b>Concentrations</b>	None
<b>Accreditation</b>	No programmatic accreditation applicable.
<b>CIP Code and Description</b>	<b>51.0816 (Speech-Language Pathology Assistant)</b> A program that prepares individuals, under the supervision of speech-language pathologists, to assist in the provision of speech-language pathology services to individuals of all ages, including screenings and assessments, following treatment plans or protocols, documenting and reporting patient performance, performing checks and maintenance of equipment, and providing support in research projects. Includes instruction in speech and language development, phonetics, childhood and adult communication disorders, speech and hearing screening, and clinical procedures in speech-language pathology.
<b>SOC Code and Title</b>	<b>31-9099 (Healthcare Support Workers, All Other)</b>
<b>Credit Hours</b>	62-63
<b>Implementation Date</b>	August 1, 2025
<b>Modality and Delivery Site</b>	Hybrid (On-Ground) at RSCC's main campus
<b>Department/College</b>	Division of Health Sciences
<b>Governing Board Approval Date</b>	March 27, 2025

## ALIGNMENT WITH STATE MASTER PLAN AND INSTITUTIONAL MISSION/STRATEGIC PLAN

Roane State Community College (RSCC) proposes an Associate of Applied Science (AAS) in Speech-Language Pathology Assistant to address significant shortages of service providers in rural communities in East Tennessee. The proposed program aligns with the access and completion goals of the THEC State Master Plan for Higher Education through offering a degree in distressed and at-risk counties that make up Roane State's service area, thereby providing a higher education option for student who may otherwise have decided not to pursue higher education due to an inability to relocate. Further, the proposed program aligns with the Drive to 55 educational attainment goal by

offering an accessible degree program bolstered by success coaching and advisement to help students attain their associate's degree. Finally, the proposed program aligns with the Family Prosperity pillar of the State Master Plan Update by offering an affordable credential designed to allow students better employment opportunities, to contribute to their communities in a high-need occupation, and to earn a livable wage.

The proposed program aligns with RSCC's institutional mission and strategic plan by providing local training to equip individuals to serve their communities. The proposed program also aligns with the Tennessee Board of Regent's (TBR) Strategic Plan's commitment to improving the condition of individuals, families, and communities across the state through economic vitality and mobility through programming designed to support local schools and to provide advancement opportunities for students completing the program.

## **PROGRAM DUPLICATION**

The proposed Speech-Language Pathology Assistant, AAS will be the first associate-level program in the state of Tennessee.

## **WORKFORCE ALIGNMENT**

According to the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA), Tennessee expects a 31% increase in demand for speech-language pathologists from 2018-2028, an expansion in need that will be especially pronounced in rural areas that do not have the service providers in educational and healthcare settings to match demand. The proposed program will provide accessible education to rural Tennesseans and produce graduates eligible to be licensed by the Tennessee Board of Communication Disorders and Sciences as Speech-Language Pathology Assistants and to sit for the Certified Speech-Language Pathology Assistant (C-SLPA) exam developed by ASHA.

A 2022 survey conducted by the Tennessee Department of Education found that 32 school districts reported vacancies exceeding six months in speech-language pathology, and that 64% of Tennessee special education directors were concerned about having capacity over the next five years to meet projected speech-language needs of students. The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) projects a 6% national growth in speech-language pathology assistants by 2033, or roughly 15,300 annual openings. O-NET Online also reflects a 19% increase in Tennessee by 2030, with 280 annual openings. Speech-language pathology assistants have competitive starting salaries both nationally and locally, with an average hourly wage of \$30.77 nationally and \$22—\$30 per hour in RSCC's service area, equivalent to a full-time salary ranging from \$45,760—\$62,400.

## **CURRICULUM**

The proposed program will consist of 63 credit hours of coursework offered primarily on-ground, with some courses being offered online. The coursework will include 35 credit hours of general education courses and 28 credit hours constituting the program core. Students will be able to complete as many as 10 classes via dual enrollment. As part of the program, all students will complete at least 100 hours of hands-on clinical training, which is required for licensure. Eleven new courses were developed for the proposed program, and all have received the necessary campus approvals.

TBR and RSCC intend to seek articulation and transfer agreements with public institutions in the state offering undergraduate degrees in Speech-Language Pathology, including Austin Peay State University, East Tennessee State University, Middle Tennessee State University, Tennessee State University, and the University of Tennessee, Knoxville.



## PROJECTED ENROLLMENT AND GRADUATION

	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28
<b>Enrollment</b>	12	24	24
<b>Graduates</b>	--	10	10

## STUDENT INTEREST AND COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

RSCC anticipates student interest in the proposed program since it will be the first program of its kind in the state, and 30 of the 50 states in the country offer programming in speech-language pathology assistant. Initial outreach for the proposed program, including a social media campaign for the new Introduction to Communication Disorders course, has resulted in significant inquiries from prospective students (25+ contacts in Scott County alone). Additional outreach to surrounding counties, school districts, and prospective students is planned following necessary approvals. Enrollment in RSCC's Occupational Therapist Assistant, a similar program, has met similar enrollment projections, and comparisons with other speech-language pathologist assistant programs in the southeast demonstrate that enrollment projections are reasonable.

Letters of support were provided by the Tennessee Department of Education, Anderson County Schools, Cumberland County Schools, Roane County Schools, and Grace Rehabilitation Center speak to the critical need for speech-language providers and the difficulties with hiring and retaining qualified providers in rural and underserved areas.

## PROGRAM COSTS AND REVENUES

The proposed one-time and recurring expenditures for the Speech-Language Pathology Assistant, AAS program are listed in the Financial Projections Table below. Start-up costs are relatively low, and the program anticipates being revenue positive by Year 2.

**Table 1: Estimated Costs to Deliver the Proposed Program**

<i>Estimated Costs to Deliver the Proposed Program</i>						
<b>One-Time Expenditures</b>						
<b>Category</b>	<b>Planning</b>	<b>Year 1</b>	<b>Year 2</b>	<b>Year 3</b>	<b>Year 4</b>	<b>Year 5</b>
Faculty & Instructional Staff						
Non-Instructional Staff						
Graduate Assistants						
Accreditation						
Consultants						
Equipment	\$6,000					
Information Tech	\$2,500					
Library						
Marketing						
Facilities						
Travel						

Other						
<i>Total One-Time Expenditures</i>	\$8,500	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
<b>Recurring Expenditures</b>						
<b>Category</b>	<b>Planning</b>	<b>Year 1</b>	<b>Year 2</b>	<b>Year 3</b>	<b>Year 4</b>	<b>Year 5</b>
Faculty & Instructional Staff	\$94,580	\$96,472	\$98,401	\$100,369	\$102,376	\$104,424
Non-Instructional Staff						
Graduate Assistants						
Accreditation						
Consultants						
Equipment		\$4,000	\$4,000	\$4,000	\$4,000	\$4,000
Information Tech						
Library						
Marketing						
Facilities						
Travel		\$1,500	\$1,500	\$1,500	\$1,500	\$1,500
Other:						
<i>Total Recurring Expenditures</i>	\$94,580	\$101,972	\$103,901	\$105,869	\$107,876	\$109,924
<b>Grand Total (One-Time and Recurring)</b>	<b>\$103,080</b>	<b>\$101,972</b>	<b>\$103,901</b>	<b>\$105,869</b>	<b>\$107,876</b>	<b>\$109,924</b>
<b>Projected Revenues</b>						
<b>Category</b>	<b>Planning</b>	<b>Year 1</b>	<b>Year 2</b>	<b>Year 3</b>	<b>Year 4</b>	<b>Year 5</b>
Tuition		\$63,134	\$125,773	\$128,289	\$130,854	\$133,472
Grants/Gifts						
Other						
<b>Total Revenues</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$63,134</b>	<b>\$125,773</b>	<b>\$128,289</b>	<b>\$130,854</b>	<b>\$133,472</b>



# TENNESSEE HIGHER EDUCATION COMMISSION

REGULAR CALENDAR ITEM: I.B.

**MEETING DATE:** May 15, 2025

**SUBJECT:** New Academic Program  
Tennessee Technological University  
Agriscience Technology, Master of Science (MS)

**ITEM TYPE:** Action

## PROGRAM OVERVIEW

<b>Title and Designation</b>	Agriscience Technology, Master of Science (MS)
<b>Concentrations</b>	None
<b>Accreditation</b>	No programmatic accreditation applicable.
<b>CIP Code and Description</b>	<b>01.0308 (Agroecology and Sustainable Agriculture)</b> A program that focuses on agricultural principles and practices that, over the long term, enhance environmental quality, make efficient use of nonrenewable resources, integrate natural biological cycles and controls, and are economically viable and socially responsible; and that may prepare individuals to apply this knowledge to the solution of agricultural and environmental problems. Includes instruction in principles of agroecology, crop and soil sciences, entomology, horticulture, animal science, weed science and management, soil fertility and nutrient cycling, applied ecology, agricultural economics, and rangeland ecology and watershed management.
<b>SOC Code and Title</b>	11-9013 (Farmers, Ranchers, and Other Agricultural Managers) 19-1013 (Soil and Plant Scientists) 19-1031 (Conservation Scientists) 25-1041 (Agricultural Sciences Teachers, Postsecondary) 25-1043 (Forestry and Conservation Science Teachers, Postsecondary) 45-1011 (First-Line Supervisors of Farming, Fishing, and Forestry Workers)
<b>Credit Hours</b>	30-33
<b>Implementation Date</b>	August 1, 2025
<b>Modality and Delivery Site</b>	On-Ground/Traditional
<b>Department/College</b>	School of Agriculture, College of Agriculture and Human Ecology
<b>Governing Board Approval Date</b>	March 6, 2025

## ALIGNMENT WITH STATE MASTER PLAN AND INSTITUTIONAL MISSION/STRATEGIC PLAN

The proposed Master of Science (MS) in Agriscience Technology at Tennessee Technological University (TTU) was developed in response to increasing industry and student demand for a

program focused on technological practices related to sustainable agriculture and environmental systems. The Agriscience Technology, MS will serve both current undergraduates and working professionals and will develop graduates who are ready to solve real-world problems through research, adopting new technologies, and improving production practices. The program leverages the university's extensive resources, including 340 acres of campus farmland and a 1,200 acre farm in Livingston, to promote "Education for Life" and "Innovation" through advanced research in global positioning systems, plant genetics, engineering, and soil conservation.

The proposed program aligns with THEC State Master Plan for Higher Education's call for academic programming that addresses Tennessee's economic development and workforce needs through emerging technologies. This alignment is evidenced by the robust partnerships with industry leaders like Cobb-Vantress, Aviagen, Tyson, DeltAg, and John Deere, as well as \$2 million dollars of existing grant-funded research initiatives in poultry science that will benefit students of the proposed program. The proposed Agriscience Technology, MS also aligns with the Family Prosperity and Future of Work pillars of the Master Plan 2020 Update by offering a program that will improve the lives of all Tennesseans through agricultural research designed to address issues of environmental impact, production efficiency, and long-term sustainability.

Building on TTU's century-long agricultural legacy, the proposed MS in Agriscience Technology addresses two core goals of the "Tech Tomorrow" strategic plan: "Education for Life" and "Innovation in All We Do." The proposed program will promote "Education for Life" by offering courses, experiences, and opportunities designed to develop students' career advancement. The proposed Agriscience Technology, MS also furthers the "Innovation in All We Do" goal by offering a distinctive, technology-focused program to provide practical solutions to problems through innovation. The proposed program also aligns with the university's Rural Reimagined initiative by training skilled graduates to help rural communities transition to smart farming systems, while fostering cross-disciplinary research collaboration that responds to consistent alumni demand for graduate-level agricultural education.

## **PROGRAM DUPLICATION**

TTU's proposed MS in Agriscience Technology would be the only program focusing solely on technology practices related to sustainable agriculture. It also stands apart by integrating traditionally separate disciplines like animal science, plant science, and soil science into a unified study of agricultural systems ecology, training graduates to use cutting-edge technologies like drones and DNA sequencing to enhance agricultural productivity while minimizing environmental impacts in smart farming systems.

## **WORKFORCE ALIGNMENT**

The proposed MS in Agriscience Technology at TTU addresses critical workforce development needs in the state's agricultural sector, which generates an \$81 billion economic impact and sustains 342,000 jobs across 69,500 farming operations occupying 40% of Tennessee's acreage. The Coalition for a Sustainable Agriculture Workforce emphasizes an urgent demand for highly trained agronomists, soil scientists, and plant breeders to advance technical innovations essential for meeting future production and sustainability challenges. This graduate program plans to respond to this urgent demand and the U.S. Department of Labor's projected 7% growth in Agricultural and Food Scientist positions through 2026, by training advanced professionals equipped to facilitate Tennessee's transition from conventional to smart farming systems while addressing emerging demands in sustainable crop production, food security, and environmental resource preservation.

TTU is also well positioned between Knoxville, Nashville, and Chattanooga to serve the 14 county Upper Cumberland Region, where agriculture contributes \$1.7 billion and sustains more than 8,800 jobs across eight counties. Despite the regional presence of five community colleges, three Tennessee Colleges of Applied Technology, and TTU, a significant deficit persists in advanced STEM-trained agricultural professionals. The program will address this workforce gap by preparing graduates to implement innovative technologies and sustainable practices across one of the most geographically diverse regions in the southeastern United States.

## CURRICULUM

The proposed MS in Agriscience Technology will have a thesis and non-thesis option. Students in the thesis option must take 30 credit hours, while those in the non-thesis option will complete 33 credit hours. In each option, 12-18 credit hours will be selected by the student's graduate advisory committee based on their intended research topic or the topic of their special project for non-thesis students. The program modality is majority on-ground (hybrid) and designed to be completed in two years. The program will require eight new courses, all of which have been developed and undergone necessary campus approvals.

The MS in Agriscience Technology program aims to develop flexible, innovative graduates who can solve real-world problems using the latest technological advances. Graduates must be adept at applying integrative analytical skills, incorporating technology into their research programs, and being capable of working in diverse groups. This will be achieved through a multidisciplinary approach within the School of Agriculture, utilizing faculty with expertise in animal science, horticulture, soil science, geospatial technology, engineering, and agribusiness.

Students will benefit from research opportunities alongside TTU faculty, many of whom have won sizeable prestigious grants and research funding from government and industry sources. TTU is also constructing and renovating state of the art facilities to support the proposed program, including a new Agriscience Technology Innovation Center (with donor funds and university match) and a greenhouse facility headhouse (renovation via grant funding). These new and renovated facilities will complement the existing poultry research facility, lab space in Oakley Hall, and shared lab facilities in the Science Building and Water Center.

## PROJECTED ENROLLMENT AND GRADUATION

The enrollment and graduation figures below represent full-time and part-time enrollment.

	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	2029-30
<b>Enrollment</b>	7	12	16	19	19
<b>Graduates</b>	0	3	4	7	7

## STUDENT INTEREST AND COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

In 2018, TTU surveyed alumni and students currently enrolled in the School of Agriculture to determine their interest in the proposed program. TTU distributed the survey to 680 alumni and received 128 responses resulting in an 18.2% response rate. Among surveyed TTU alumni, 30% (n=38) expressed high interest in the program, with 22% (n=28) ready to enroll immediately, while 85% (n=109) preferred part-time attendance and 53% (n=68) indicated potential employer support, including 11% (n=14) whose employers require or encourage sustainable agriculture degrees. Of the 320 undergraduate students surveyed, 75 responded (23.44% response rate), with 21% (n=16)

expressing high interest and 65% (n=49) indicating moderate interest in the program. Most undergraduate respondents plan to enroll within two to four years of the program's launch, with 63% (n=47) intending to attend full-time.

Letters of support were received from industry partners who spoke to the need to develop and implement new technologies and research to boost farm production and efficiencies. The industry partners also expressed an interest in hiring graduates from this program who will be adept in the technological changes and can offer solutions for a more sustainable future. Support letters were provided by the Deputy Commissioner of the Tennessee Department of Agriculture, the Tennessee Farmers' Cooperative, the Tennessee Poultry Association, and Generation Farms.

## EXTERNAL JUDGMENT

An external review of the proposed program was conducted on September 12 and 13, 2024, by Dr. Dean Kopsell, Associate Dean for Academic and Faculty Affairs at the University of Georgia. The site visit included tours of TTU's farms and laboratory facilities, meetings with university leadership, faculty, and students, as well as industry and community partners. Dr. Kopsell stated that he strongly endorsed the program, noting he was "unaware of any other program within the state or region that provides such a curriculum." He believes the program has been "uniquely crafted to provide solid training in the emerging field of agriscience technologies." He emphasized the program's strong alignment with workforce needs, citing the National Institute of Food and Agriculture of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's report "Employment Opportunities for College Graduates in Food, Agriculture, Renewable Natural Resources and the Environment, United States, 2020-2025," which projects that "employment opportunities will remain strong for new college graduates with interest and expertise in food, agriculture, renewable natural resources and the environment, with an average of 59,400 job openings annually in the agricultural sector." Dr. Kopsell concluded his report by outlining the program's comprehensive benefits, noting its potential to enhance faculty development and retention while expanding research capacity and grant funding, drive economic development in the agricultural sector, meet regional workforce demands, and create unique educational opportunities for both traditional students and working professionals.

## PROGRAM COSTS AND REVENUES

The proposed expenditures for the MS in Agriscience Technology are listed in Table 1 below. Start-up costs are minimal, and most expenditures are for information technology, marketing, and travel for faculty professional development. The proposed program utilized the expedited academic program approval process, so tuition and revenue figures were not provided as delineated in the policy. Facility renovation and construction will be covered by donor funds, university matching funds, and grants; therefore, facilities costs are not included below.

**Table 1: Estimated Costs to Deliver the Proposed Program**

<i><b>Estimated Costs to Deliver the Proposed Program</b></i>						
<b>One-Time Expenditures</b>						
<b>Category</b>	<b>Planning</b>	<b>Year 1</b>	<b>Year 2</b>	<b>Year 3</b>	<b>Year 4</b>	<b>Year 5</b>
Faculty & Instructional Staff						

Non-Instructional Staff						
Graduate Assistants						
Accreditation						
Consultants	\$3,000					
Equipment						
Information Tech						
Library						
Marketing						
Facilities						
Travel						
Other						
<i>Total One-Time Expenditures</i>	\$3,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
<b>Recurring Expenditures</b>						
<b>Category</b>	<b>Planning</b>	<b>Year 1</b>	<b>Year 2</b>	<b>Year 3</b>	<b>Year 4</b>	<b>Year 5</b>
Faculty & Instructional Staff						
Non-Instructional Staff						
Graduate Assistants						
Accreditation						
Consultants						
Equipment						
Information Tech		\$3,250	\$3,250	\$3,250	\$3,250	\$3,250
Library						
Marketing	\$2,000	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$1,000
Facilities						
Travel	\$4,000	\$4,000	\$4,000	\$4,000	\$4,000	\$4,000
Other						
<i>Total Recurring Expenditures</i>	\$6,000	\$8,250	\$8,250	\$8,250	\$8,250	\$8,250
<b>Grand Total (One-Time and Recurring)</b>	<b>\$9,000</b>	<b>\$8,250</b>	<b>\$8,250</b>	<b>\$8,250</b>	<b>\$8,250</b>	<b>\$8,250</b>

Projected Revenues						
Category	Planning	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Tuition		\$62,568	\$108,072	\$136,512	\$159,264	\$159,264
Grants						
Other						
<b>Total Revenues</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$62,568</b>	<b>\$108,072</b>	<b>\$136,512</b>	<b>\$159,264</b>	<b>\$159,264</b>





# TENNESSEE HIGHER EDUCATION COMMISSION

REGULAR CALENDAR ITEM: I.C.

**MEETING DATE:** May 15, 2025

**SUBJECT:** New Academic Program  
Tennessee Technological University  
Child Life, Master of Science (MS)

**ITEM TYPE:** Action

## PROGRAM OVERVIEW

<b>Title and Designation</b>	Child Life, Master of Science (MS)
<b>Concentrations</b>	None
<b>Accreditation</b>	No programmatic accreditation applicable.
<b>CIP Code and Description</b>	<b>19.0799 (Human Development, Family Studies, and Related Services, Other)</b> Any instructional program in human development, family studies, and related services not listed above.
<b>SOC Code and Title</b>	11-9111 (Medical and Health Services Managers) 21-1021 (Child, Family, and School Social Workers) 21-1094 (Community Health Workers) 31-9099 (Health Support Workers, All Other) 29-1129 (Therapists, All Other) 21-1091 (Health Education Specialists) 25-1071 (Health Specialties Teachers, Post Secondary) 25-1192 (Family and Consumer Sciences Teachers, Post Secondary)
<b>Credit Hours</b>	36
<b>Implementation Date</b>	August 1, 2026
<b>Modality and Delivery Site</b>	Fully Online
<b>Department/College</b>	School of Human Ecology, College of Agriculture and Human Ecology
<b>Governing Board Approval Date</b>	March 6, 2025

## ALIGNMENT WITH STATE MASTER PLAN AND INSTITUTIONAL MISSION/STRATEGIC PLAN

Certified Child Life Specialists (CCLS) typically work in pediatric healthcare settings and provide psychosocial interventions to prevent harmful impacts from stress among child patients and their families, thereby contributing to patient experiences and wellbeing. The proposed Master of Science (MS) in Child Life at Tennessee Technological University (TTU) aims to develop graduates with advanced competencies in psychosocial intervention, research methodology, and evidence-based practice, enabling them to deliver high-quality support to children and families navigating healthcare experiences. The proposed program was developed in response to critical shifts in the healthcare

landscape, particularly the current certified child life specialist staffing crisis and the growing preference for graduate-level practitioners. These shifts are evident in recent trends within the field, where graduate students are now significantly more likely to secure clinical internships compared to undergraduates. Additionally, the evolution of interdisciplinary healthcare teams has established graduate education as the standard among social workers, occupational therapists, speech-language pathologists, and other allied health professionals, making advanced degrees increasingly vital for child life specialists to maintain professional parity with their colleagues.

The proposed program addresses multiple priorities within the THEC State Master Plan. The combination of competitive state tuition rates and a fully online delivery format removes traditional barriers to graduate education, particularly benefiting adult learners and healthcare professionals seeking career advancement. This advances the State Master Plan's family prosperity priority by extending educational access across Tennessee's distressed counties and the Upper Cumberland Region. Additionally, by focusing on the high-demand fields of health sciences and human services, the program strengthens Tennessee's healthcare workforce while creating strategic alignment between industry needs and academic programming.

The proposed program aligns with TTU's institutional mission of creating, advancing, and applying knowledge through enduring education, impactful research, and collaborative service. By preparing graduates for the competitive healthcare industry, the program expands career opportunities and enhances the economic mobility of child life professionals. As Tennessee's first state university to offer an online Child Life master's degree, this program represents TTU's dedication to educational innovation and accessibility. The program will also expand upon TTU's established leadership in child life education, building on its undergraduate program's achievement as one of the first five nationally to earn the Association of Child Life Professionals' (ACLP) Academic Program Endorsement.

## **PROGRAM DUPLICATION**

There are no other public universities offering a master's level program in Child Life. Vanderbilt University is the only institution offering graduate-level child life training in Tennessee, but it is not an ACLP-endorsed program or offered online. TTU's proposed program will also be more financially accessible for students across the state.

## **WORKFORCE ALIGNMENT**

The proposed MS in Child Life at TTU addresses critical workforce needs in the healthcare sector, particularly responding to the current staffing shortage across the child life profession due in part to the inadequate number of qualified Certified Child Life Specialists (CCLS) credentialed professionals needed to fill open child life positions. According to a 2023 survey of 74 child life clinical programs across 33 states, only 28.4% of the child life clinical programs were fully staffed, with 17 programs reporting four or more job openings. Despite these staffing challenges, the majority of surveyed child life programs project growth in the next five years, with most expecting to add one to three new child life specialist positions. This growth aligns with broader healthcare employment projections from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, which forecasts the healthcare and social assistance sector to create the most jobs between 2021 and 2031, with healthcare professions specifically expected to grow by 13% over the next decade.

Certified Child Life Specialists have diverse employment opportunities across multiple healthcare settings, including children's hospitals, pediatric units within general hospitals, pediatric outpatient clinics, pediatric hospice and palliative care facilities, pediatric oncology centers, pediatric mental

health centers, pediatric rehabilitation centers, private practice healthcare facilities, educational institutions, and nonprofit organizations. According to the 2021 ACLP Salary Survey, child life professionals across southern states earned average salaries between \$49,000—\$53,000 annually, with higher salaries reported for those with graduate degrees, more experience, and leadership roles. THEC's 2023 Academic Supply for Occupational Demand report states that healthcare occupations constitute 11 of the top 15 positions experiencing the greatest supply gaps in Tennessee, based on job openings exceeding available qualified candidates. Recent workforce data from February 2025 underscores this critical need, with 119 certified child life specialist positions listed on Indeed nationwide and significant vacancies at Tennessee children's hospitals, including seven openings at LeBonheur in Memphis, six current vacancies at Monroe Carell Jr. at Vanderbilt, and four unfilled positions at Niswonger Children's Hospital. East Tennessee Children's Hospital has reported particular difficulty filling positions, with their last opening taking eight months to staff.

The employment outlook extends beyond traditional hospital settings, with program completers in health sciences demonstrating some of the highest employment rates across career clusters. This trend is particularly significant in Tennessee, where healthcare and life sciences are designated as a Tennessee Economic and Community Development (TNECD) target industry. The state's investment in universities and research facilities within this sector aims to complement and enable the development of a capable workforce. This proposed program directly supports this goal by preparing advanced practitioners for pediatric healthcare settings with a documented staffing crisis and growing demand for graduate-level preparation.

## CURRICULUM

The proposed MS in Child Life will have two tracks: a 36 credit degree-only option and a 43 credit experiential learning option. The degree-only track, designed for working Certified Child Life Specialists seeking career advancement, can be completed either full-time or part-time through a fully online format. As the program transitions to the graduate level, the undergraduate Child Life concentration will be phased out, retaining only two sophomore-level courses to introduce undergraduates to the field and foster interest in the master's program. The curriculum integrates advanced coursework in child development, family science, psychosocial practice, and research methodology, and will require 14 newly developed courses aligned with the Association of Child Life Professionals' Certification Eligibility Requirements and Child Life Competencies.

The experiential learning track includes the same 36 credit core curriculum plus seven credits of structured clinical experience for those students who plan to sit for the Child Life Certification Exam. This track follows a cohort model with full-time enrollment to prepare students for competitive clinical placements. The additional experiential learning includes a one credit introduction to clinical experience course, a three credit pre-internship practicum (minimum 120 hours), and a three credit clinical internship (minimum 600 hours). Both tracks incorporate the same rigorous coursework across four domains: Care of Infants, Children, Youth and Families; Professional Responsibility; Education and Supervision; and Research Fundamentals. The program culminates in a capstone course, Professional Topics and Ethical Practice, requiring completion of all other coursework and development of a professional portfolio demonstrating mastery of core competencies.

## PROJECTED ENROLLMENT AND GRADUATION

The enrollment and graduation figures below represent full-time and part-time enrollment.

	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	2029-30	2030-31
<b>Enrollment</b>	7	11	14	18	20
<b>Graduates</b>	0	0	2	4	6

## STUDENT INTEREST AND COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

In 2023, TTU surveyed current undergraduate child life students and recent program alumni to determine interest in the proposed program. TTU distributed the survey to 29 current undergraduate students and received 11 responses, resulting in a 37.9% response rate. Among current students, 72.7% (n=8) expressed significant interest in the program and indicated plans to enroll. The survey was also sent to 11 recent alumni, with seven responses received (63.6% response rate), of which 57.2% (n=4) expressed interest in enrolling. Additionally, the School of Human Ecology received 54 student contacts through their website between May 2019 and September 2023. Of these contacts, 50% (n=27) specifically inquired about master's-level training in Child Life, while 26% (n=14) asked about online program delivery options.

Letters of support were received from leading pediatric healthcare institutions that emphasized the critical need for graduate-prepared Child Life Specialists and expressed interest in hiring program graduates. Support letters were provided by administrators and practitioners from Vanderbilt University Medical Center, St. Jude Children's Research Hospital, and Texas Woman's University. St. Jude Children's Hospital has specifically committed to expanding regional student internship opportunities. The program's strong industry connections are further evidenced by TTU's program director serving as chair of the Southeastern Association of Child Life Specialists (SEACLP) and the undergraduate program's endorsement from the Association of Child Life Professionals (ACLP).

## EXTERNAL JUDGMENT

An external review of the proposed program was conducted on October 25, 2024, by Dr. Jenny Chabot, Professor and Child Life Graduate Program Coordinator at Ohio University. The site visit included meetings with university leadership, faculty, students, and healthcare industry partners. Dr. Chabot strongly endorsed the program, noting that "the curriculum is extensive, rigorous, and meets the content and course requirements for the Association of Child Life Professionals (ACLP) Endorsement." She also emphasized the program's national prominence through its designated director, Dr. Sisk, who currently serves as a founding member and current co-chair of the Child Life Academic Society.

Dr. Chabot highlighted the critical need for the program, particularly its online delivery format, stating that "the cost of relocating to a new college town, paying living expenses and tuition that includes fees tied to in-person services universities provide, tied with the cost students must already put into often relocating for their final 600-hour internship and the fee to sit for the certification exam, collectively contributes to the great need for on-line programs in child life." Dr. Chabot concluded her report by strongly recommending approval, noting that the program meets "the high standards of the profession, of the associations that oversee the profession and credentialing, and of the hospital programs looking for well-trained candidates."

## PROGRAM COSTS AND REVENUES

The proposed expenditures for the MS in Child Life are listed in Table 1 below. Start-up costs are minimal, and most expenditures are for consultants, equipment, and marketing. A 12-month lecturer will be hired in the first year to teach, coordinate clinical experiences, market and recruit students, and address the profession's competitive nature and need for extensive clinical preparation. Adjunct instructors will be hired to teach the undergraduate child life courses, allowing the program director to teach the graduate-level courses. A graduate assistantship will be offered in Year 2 to assist with administrative support, and a one-time ACLP academic endorsement application fee of \$1,750 will be needed for accreditation purposes, as well as an annual maintenance fee of \$250.

**Table 1: Estimated Costs to Deliver the Proposed Program**

<b><i>Estimated Costs to Deliver the Proposed Program</i></b>						
<b>One-Time Expenditures</b>						
<b>Category</b>	<b>Planning</b>	<b>Year 1</b>	<b>Year 2</b>	<b>Year 3</b>	<b>Year 4</b>	<b>Year 5</b>
Faculty & Instructional Staff	\$2,000					
Non-Instructional Staff						
Graduate Assistants						
Accreditation						
Consultants	\$4,000	\$1,500				
Equipment		\$2,500				
Information Tech						
Library						
Marketing		\$1,000				
Facilities						
Travel						
Other						
<i>Total One-Time Expenditures</i>	<i>\$6,000</i>	<i>\$5,000</i>	<i>\$0</i>	<i>\$0</i>	<i>\$0</i>	<i>\$0</i>
<b>Recurring Expenditures</b>						
<b>Category</b>	<b>Planning</b>	<b>Year 1</b>	<b>Year 2</b>	<b>Year 3</b>	<b>Year 4</b>	<b>Year 5</b>
Faculty & Instructional Staff		\$103,248	\$105,048	\$106,884	\$108,756	\$110,665
Non-Instructional Staff						

Graduate Assistants			\$25,000	\$26,000	\$26,040	\$26,041
Accreditation		\$1,750	\$250	\$250	\$250	\$250
Consultants						
Equipment						
Information Tech						
Library						
Marketing						
Facilities						
Travel						
Other						
<i>Total Recurring Expenditures</i>	\$0	\$104,998	\$130,298	\$133,134	\$135,046	\$136,956
<b>Grand Total (One-Time and Recurring)</b>	<b>\$6,000</b>	<b>\$109,998</b>	<b>\$130,298</b>	<b>\$133,134</b>	<b>\$135,046</b>	<b>\$136,956</b>
<b>Projected Revenues</b>						
<b>Category</b>	<b>Planning</b>	<b>Year 1</b>	<b>Year 2</b>	<b>Year 3</b>	<b>Year 4</b>	<b>Year 5</b>
Tuition		\$72,060	\$112,442	\$155,860	\$208,646	\$242,110
Grants						
Other						
<b>Total Revenues</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$72,060</b>	<b>\$112,442</b>	<b>\$155,860</b>	<b>\$208,646</b>	<b>\$242,110</b>



# TENNESSEE HIGHER EDUCATION COMMISSION

REGULAR CALENDAR ITEM: I.D.

**MEETING DATE:** May 15, 2025

**SUBJECT:** New Academic Program  
Tennessee Technological University  
Interdisciplinary Computing, Bachelor of Science (BS)

**ITEM TYPE:** Action

## PROGRAM OVERVIEW

<b>Title and Designation</b>	Interdisciplinary Computing, Bachelor of Science (BS)
<b>Concentrations</b>	None
<b>Accreditation</b>	No programmatic accreditation applicable.
<b>CIP Code and Description</b>	<b>11.0104 (Informatics)</b> A program that focuses on computer systems from a user-centered perspective and studies the structure, behavior and interactions of natural and artificial systems that store, process and communicate information. Includes instruction in information sciences, human computer interaction, information system analysis and design, telecommunications structure and information architecture and management.
<b>SOC Code and Title</b>	15-1221 (Computer and Information Research Scientists) 15-1252 (Software Developers) 15-1253 (Software Quality Assurance Analysts and Testers) 15-1255 (Web and Digital Interface Designers)
<b>Credit Hours</b>	120
<b>Implementation Date</b>	August 1, 2025
<b>Modality and Delivery Site</b>	Majority On-Ground/Hybrid
<b>Department/College</b>	College of Interdisciplinary Studies, School of Interdisciplinary Studies
<b>Governing Board Approval Date</b>	April 30, 2025

## ALIGNMENT WITH STATE MASTER PLAN AND INSTITUTIONAL MISSION/STRATEGIC PLAN

Tennessee Technological University (TTU) proposes a Bachelor of Science (BS) in Interdisciplinary Computing. The proposed program is designed to prepare graduates to apply computing solutions to diverse fields beyond traditional computer science. Rather than focusing on programming skills or theoretical computer science, this innovative degree combines computing knowledge with expertise in another discipline area, allowing students to bridge technology with fields such as business, healthcare, agriculture, or the arts. The proposed program represents a strategic response

to Tennessee's evolving workforce needs and educational priorities. The program directly addresses multiple initiatives within THEC's Master Plan, particularly enhancing family prosperity by creating a flexible, interdisciplinary degree path for Tennesseans with some college credit but no degree. Its interdisciplinary design accommodates course credits from various disciplines, preserving financial aid eligibility and supporting successful degree completion. It also aligns with the Master Plan's "Enabling the Competitive Edge" framework through its accessible structure that does not require advanced mathematics prerequisites while still developing critical competencies in artificial intelligence, data analysis, and professional communication. All students in the program will complete at least 10 credit hours of experiential education, providing them with opportunities to apply classroom learning to real-world scenarios in cross-disciplinary teams.

The program exemplifies Tennessee Technological University's (TTU's) commitment to preparing career-ready graduates while addressing state workforce needs. By combining computing expertise with discipline-specific knowledge, the program delivers practical, applied education while maximizing institutional resources through collaboration between the College of Engineering and the College of Interdisciplinary Studies. The program's emphasis on industry partnerships, experiential learning, and real-world problem solving aligns with TTU's reputation for producing graduates who immediately contribute to Tennessee's economic growth and technological advancement. This approach demonstrates TTU's responsiveness to evolving workforce demands and strengthens the state's competitive position in the technology sector through innovative educational pathways.

## **PROGRAM DUPLICATION**

The program is unique among Tennessee public and private institutions, as there are currently no programs in the state that share the same Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) code: 11.0104 - Informatics. While several universities offer computing programs with similar CIP codes, these are primarily traditional computer science or information systems degrees housed in colleges of engineering and business. The most comparable program is the University of Tennessee, Knoxville's BS in Data Science through their College of Emerging and Collaborative Studies, recently implemented in fall 2024. However, TTU's program distinguishes itself through its structured cognate area approach that incorporates a sequence of courses equivalent to a minor and emphasizes industry partnerships that provide students with contextualized learning experiences in their chosen fields.

## **WORKFORCE ALIGNMENT**

The proposed BS in Interdisciplinary Computing addresses critical workforce needs across multiple sectors in Tennessee's rapidly evolving technology landscape. Employment data from O\*NET Online in April 2024 demonstrates substantial and growing demand for computing professionals, with recent job searches revealing 560 Computer and Information Systems Manager positions, 559 Computer Systems Analyst positions, and 1,216 Software Developer positions posted in Tennessee during a two-month period. Additionally, a June 2024 search on Indeed identified 363 open Computer Information Systems positions in Tennessee requiring a bachelor's degree. This demand is further amplified by Oracle's April 2024 announcement of relocating their corporate headquarters to Nashville, which is expected to create 8,500 jobs over the next decade, many requiring computing expertise combined with domain-specific knowledge. In addition, Tennessee's Academic Supply for Occupational Demand Report has identified information technology (IT) as a high-demand occupation in Tennessee, with IT occupations projected to grow 2.9% annually from 2020 to 2030,



significantly outpacing average occupational growth. The report specifically highlights unmet needs for bachelor's degree holders in computer systems analysis and computer and information sciences, which are areas directly addressed by the proposed program's interdisciplinary approach. This local demand reflects broader national trends documented by the U.S. Department of Labor, which projects computer and information technology occupations to grow much faster than average through 2032, with approximately 377,500 annual openings nationally. The program's graduates will be particularly well-positioned for these opportunities given their unique combination of computing and discipline-focused expertise.

Tennessee's state government has further emphasized the importance of computing education through recent legislative initiatives, including House Bill 2153 (passed in 2022), which requires high school students to receive at least one credit of computer science education for high school graduation beginning with the 2024-25 ninth-grade cohort. This legislative priority underscores the state's commitment to developing a technology-capable workforce and creates a pipeline of future students with computer science foundations who may seek higher education in this field. With its innovative integration of computing with various disciplinary domains, the proposed program directly supports these state workforce development initiatives while addressing the documented gap between traditional computer science programs and the cross-disciplinary computing expertise increasingly required across Tennessee's evolving economy.

## CURRICULUM

The proposed BS in Interdisciplinary Computing would require 120 credit hours spread across five primary areas that combine computing expertise with disciplinary depth in a non-computing field. The primary components include a General Education Core (41 credit hours), a Computing Core (30 credit hours), an Intersectional Core (18 credit hours), a Cognate Area (25 credit hours), and Electives (six credit hours). The Computing Core will emphasize fundamentals in algorithmic thinking, software development, data science, and user experience design, while the Intersectional Core will focus on critical thinking, design thinking, ethics, and entrepreneurship. The Cognate Area will provide depth equivalent to a minor in a specific discipline. Another notable feature of the Cognate Area is the inclusion of 10 credit hours of formal experiential learning through a studio sequence where students actively engage in developing software solutions relevant to their chosen area. The curriculum also includes six credit hours of electives, enabling students to transfer in courses from other institutions or apply credits to complete a minor if desired. There will be 11 new courses designed to equip students with both technical computing skills and contextual knowledge needed to apply technology solutions within specific domains.

The program facilitates interdisciplinary integration through its innovative cognate area structure, which provides students with depth in one of fourteen non-computing disciplines, including areas such as biology, business, nursing, journalism, criminal justice, environmental studies, and education. The program will align its learning outcomes with the Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology (ABET) Computing Accreditation Commission's general criteria as benchmarks for quality. The program will also identify faculty "Cognate Champions" from each discipline who serve as advocates and subject matter experts, helping to design appropriate course sequences, develop relevant studio projects, and forge industry connections specific to their field. These champions will collaborate with computing faculty to ensure that students develop both disciplinary knowledge and the ability to apply computing solutions within their chosen context.

PROJECTED ENROLLMENT AND GRADUATION

The enrollment and graduation figures below represent full-time and part-time enrollment.

	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	2029-30
Enrollment	10	15	20	30	40
Graduates	0	0	0	7	12

STUDENT INTEREST AND COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

A survey was distributed to current TTU students in 2023 to assess interest in the proposed BS in Interdisciplinary Computing. The survey, which received responses from 45 students (18% response rate) out of 248 contacted, demonstrated strong support for the new degree offering. Survey data show that 94% of respondents (n=42) indicated that TTU should offer this degree, while 72% of respondents (n=32) found the program aligned with their career goals. Additionally, 59% (n=27) stated they would have considered it as a major had it been available when they started at the university. The survey also provided opportunities for open-ended responses. In these qualitative comments, students highlighted the value of integrating computing with other disciplines, particularly noting how such preparation would benefit careers where understanding domain-specific knowledge and computing applications is increasingly vital. Several respondents specifically mentioned that the program would address gaps in their educational experience, with some noting they had switched from computer science to other programs due to challenges with traditional computer science requirements.

Letters of support from regional employers and organizations highlight the industry demand for graduates with interdisciplinary computing expertise. Support letters were provided by Cookeville Regional Medical Center, Oak Ridge National Laboratory, Science Applications International Corporation, and the Highlands Economic Partnership. These industry partners expressed interest in offering internship opportunities for students completing the studio course requirements during the program. They also emphasized that the program would prepare students for growing job markets by creating clear pathways into computer science while broadening graduates' ability to serve across various industries, including healthcare, research, engineering, and technology.

EXTERNAL JUDGMENT

An external review of the proposed program was conducted on December 3, 2024, by Dr. Glenn Platt, C. Michael Armstrong Chair/Professor and Director of the Armstrong Institute for Emerging Technology at Miami University. Dr. Platt conducted a comprehensive site visit that included meetings with university leadership, faculty, students, and industry partners. In his evaluation, Dr. Platt offered "whole-hearted and enthusiastic support for the proposal," describing the Interdisciplinary Computing program as "the type of program every university should offer" that "represents a forward-thinking administration and faculty who understand the future of education in a world led by AI and code literacy." He highlighted the program's distinctive strength in blending computing expertise with domain-specific knowledge, noting that "the strongly developed blend of computer science and cognate area culminating in their senior project has the potential to paint a picture of a computing degree that is unlike many others." Based on his conversations with industry partners, he confirmed "there is a clear market for students with this background," and concluded that if "properly marketed, it's hard to imagine this program not succeeding."

## PROGRAM COSTS AND REVENUES

The proposed expenditures for the BS in Interdisciplinary Computing are listed in Table 1 below. Start-up costs are minimal, and most expenditures are for consultants, IT, and marketing. The program will be administered by the School of Interdisciplinary Studies (SOIS) housed in the College of Interdisciplinary Studies (CIS), while the computing core will be taught by the Department of Computer Science in the College of Engineering. A 12-month lecturer/coordinator will be hired in the SOIS to collaborate with the department chairs in computer science within the first year, along with five adjunct instructors. A recruitment specialist will also be hired in the CIS who will devote 50% of their time to assist with recruitment, advising, course scheduling, and other administrative responsibilities. Additionally, an Administrative Associate will be hired in the SOIS to support this program in the form of student information reports, ordering supplies, program communication, and maintaining financial records. The remaining recurring expenditures will go toward accreditation, library, marketing, and travel costs.

**Table 1: Estimated Costs to Deliver the Proposed Program**

<b><i>Estimated Costs to Deliver the Proposed Program</i></b>						
<b>One-Time Expenditures</b>						
<b>Category</b>	<b>Planning</b>	<b>Year 1</b>	<b>Year 2</b>	<b>Year 3</b>	<b>Year 4</b>	<b>Year 5</b>
Faculty & Instructional Staff						
Non-Instructional Staff						
Graduate Assistants						
Accreditation						
Consultants	\$2,500					
Equipment						
Information Tech		\$2,500	\$2,500			
Library						
Marketing	\$1,000					
Facilities						
Travel						
Other						
<b><i>Total One-Time Expenditures</i></b>	<b>\$3,500</b>	<b>\$2,500</b>	<b>\$2,500</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>
<b>Recurring Expenditures</b>						
<b>Category</b>	<b>Planning</b>	<b>Year 1</b>	<b>Year 2</b>	<b>Year 3</b>	<b>Year 4</b>	<b>Year 5</b>
Faculty & Instructional Staff		\$190,850	\$194,326	\$202,906	\$206,593	\$213,598

Non-Instructional Staff		\$40,000	\$41,200	\$42,436	\$43,708	\$45,020
Graduate Assistants						
Accreditation						\$2,500
Consultants						
Equipment						
Information Tech						
Library		\$4,000	\$4,000	\$4,000	\$4,000	\$4,000
Marketing		\$2,000	\$3,000	\$4,000	\$5,000	\$6,000
Facilities						
Travel		\$2,000	\$2,500	\$2,500	\$2,500	\$3,000
Other						
<i>Total Recurring Expenditures</i>	\$0	\$238,850	\$245,026	\$255,842	\$261,801	\$274,118
<b>Grand Total (One-Time and Recurring)</b>	<b>\$3,500</b>	<b>\$241,350</b>	<b>\$247,526</b>	<b>\$255,842</b>	<b>\$261,801</b>	<b>\$274,118</b>
<b>Projected Revenues</b>						
<b>Category</b>	<b>Planning</b>	<b>Year 1</b>	<b>Year 2</b>	<b>Year 3</b>	<b>Year 4</b>	<b>Year 5</b>
Tuition		\$113,760	\$175,759	\$241,376	\$372,925	\$512,151
Grants						
Other						
<b>Total Revenues</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$113,760</b>	<b>\$175,759</b>	<b>\$241,376</b>	<b>\$372,925</b>	<b>\$512,151</b>



# TENNESSEE HIGHER EDUCATION COMMISSION

REGULAR CALENDAR ITEM: I.E.

MEETING DATE: May 15, 2025

SUBJECT: New Academic Program  
University of Tennessee, Knoxville  
Retail, Hospitality, and Tourism Management, Master of Science (MS)

ITEM TYPE: Action

## PROGRAM OVERVIEW

<b>Title and Designation</b>	Retail, Hospitality, and Tourism Management, Master of Science (MS)
<b>Concentrations / Certifications</b>	NA
<b>CIP Code and Description</b>	<b>52.0901 (Hospitality Administration/Management, General)</b> A program that prepares individuals to serve as general managers and directors of hospitality operations on a system-wide basis, including both travel arrangements and promotion and the provision of traveler facilities. Includes instruction in principles of operations in the travel and tourism, hotel and lodging facilities, food services, and recreation facilities industries; hospitality marketing strategies; hospitality planning; management and coordination of franchise and unit operations; business management; accounting and financial management; hospitality transportation and logistics; and hospitality industry policies and regulations.
<b>SOC Code and Title</b>	<b>Proposed SOC Codes:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 11-9081 (Lodging Managers)</li><li>• 11-9051 (Food Service Managers)</li><li>• 13-1121 (Meeting, Convention, and Event Planners)</li><li>• 11-2021 (Marketing Managers)</li><li>• 11-2022 (Sales Managers)</li></ul>
<b>Credit Hours</b>	30
<b>Implementation Date</b>	August 1, 2025
<b>Modality and Delivery Site</b>	Fully Online
<b>Department/College</b>	Department of Retail, Hospitality, and Tourism Management; College of Education, Health, and Human Sciences
<b>Governing Board Approval Date</b>	February 27-28, 2025

## **ALIGNMENT WITH STATE MASTER PLAN AND INSTITUTIONAL MISSION/STRATEGIC PLAN**

The University of Tennessee, Knoxville (UTK) proposes an online, asynchronous Master of Science (MS) degree in Retail, Hospitality, and Tourism Management (RHTM) to complement existing undergraduate and doctoral offerings in the Department of Retail, Hospitality, and Tourism Management at UTK. The proposed program would be the first asynchronous, online master's program in Tennessee, and the only program at the master level with a focus on retail. Undergraduate students, alumni, and industry partners have all expressed interest in UTK offering the proposed program which will seek to provide students with salary advancement, promotion potential, and greater career opportunities in related fields.

The proposed program aligns with the State Master Plan for Higher Education by "addressing the state's economic development, workforce development, and research needs." According to the 2022-2023 Tennessee Academic Supply for Occupational Demand Report, leisure, retail, and hospitality jobs are anticipated to be the third- and fourth-largest industries in the state—preceded only by healthcare and manufacturing, which translates to 723,636 total jobs and 217,656 new jobs by 2030. Providing high-quality educational programming in retail, hospitality, and tourism management will benefit industry by training well-equipped leaders and entrepreneurs to take on growth and changes in the sector. The proposed program also aligns with the Student Success and Family Prosperity goals of the Master Plan Update by providing flexible, online curriculum for working and returning students interested in advancing their careers and quality of life. The proposed program will be more affordable than comparable online programs for Tennessee students, as almost all current online asynchronous offerings are out-of-state. Further, the program aligns with the goal of preparing the future workforce by offering a program with growing need in the state and enhancing student learning through work-based and experiential learning.

The proposed program also aligns with all five goals articulated in UTK's Strategic Vision and Mission. Through curriculum designed to assist with career advancement and equip graduates with skills to excel in the ever-changing entrepreneurial landscape, the proposed program provides "high-quality educational opportunities for people at every stage of life" and embraces "collaboration, agility, and innovation." Further, the proposed program will allow students to complete research relevant to their current and desired careers in concert with hands-on experience, thereby "embodying the modern R1" and "conducting research that improves lives."

## **PROGRAM DUPLICATION**

Currently, two similar programs are offered in Tennessee at Middle Tennessee State University (Leisure, Sport, and Tourism Management, MS) and at the University of Memphis (Sport and Hospitality Management, MS). However, the proposed program differs from these programs due to its online, asynchronous delivery mode and its focus on retail, as opposed to the existing programs' focus on sport management.

## **WORKFORCE ALIGNMENT**

According to research conducted by Tourism Economics on behalf of the Tennessee Department of Tourist Development, tourism generated a record \$28.9 billion in domestic spending in 2022, and Tennessee has been the fastest-growing state in travel spending since 2018, rising from 14<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> in the nation. According to the Tennessee Department of Tourist Development's report of Tennessee

visitor profiles, 33% of visitors chose shopping as part of their activities, and offering retail training alongside hospitality and tourism will continue to be valuable.

According to Bureau of Labor Statistics data, the leisure and hospitality industry will generate 113,786 more positions by 2030 statewide, with the Accommodation and Food Services sector as well as the Art, Entertainment, and Recreation sector making up the bulk of those opportunities. The retail sector is also expected to have 317,029 jobs statewide by 2030, and managerial roles associated with retail are projected to grow in Tennessee and in neighboring states. Job outlooks for general and operations managers, market research analysts, buyers and purchasing agents, food service managers, lodging managers, and entertainment and recreation managers all show double-digit growth from 2022-2032. Regional demand in East Tennessee is also expected to grow significantly between 2020 to 2030 by roughly 3.64% translating to 92,732 jobs. While not all of those jobs will require a master's degree, higher-level managerial positions will evolve from the expansion of the industry and students with master's-level training will have an advantage when pursuing management and heavily analytical roles.

**CURRICULUM**

The proposed Master of Science in Retail, Hospitality, and Tourism Management will require 30 credit hours and will include a thesis option. Students not pursuing a thesis option will complete 10 courses total, including four core courses, three to four elective courses, an industry experience, and a research project. Thesis students will be required to complete four core courses, four elective courses, and six credit hours of thesis work. Students without a background in retail, hospitality, or tourism management will be required to take a three-credit pre-requisite course, resulting in 33 total credit hours for the program. All students will complete at least six credits of applied learning in retail, hospitality, and tourism management through an industry experience, research project, or an international study abroad tour. Twelve new courses are needed to support the proposed program. All have been developed and gone through the necessary campus approvals.

**PROJECTED ENROLLMENT AND GRADUATION**

The enrollment and graduation figures below represent full-time and part-time enrollment.

	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	2029-30
<b>Enrollment</b>	30	57	65	70	76
<b>Graduates</b>	0	24	27	31	32

**STUDENT INTEREST AND COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS**

Two surveys were administered in 2024 to evaluate student interest, one of current undergraduate students and the other with retail, hospitality, and tourism professionals. The survey of undergraduate students resulted in 130 responses. Among the current students, 52.3% (n=45) expressed interest in the proposed master's degree, and 58.1% (n=76) were interested in applying for the accelerated option. The survey of working professionals garnered 1,022 responses. Sixty-seven percent of respondents had an undergraduate degree in retail, hospitality, tourism, and event management, while another 15.3% had other business majors. Of this core group, interest in the proposed program was overwhelmingly positive, with 51.4% (n=302) indicating strong interest in applying. Ninety percent (n=206) of working professionals without a bachelor's degree expressed interest in applying to the proposed program, indicating a potential pool of future students for both

the undergraduate and graduate degrees. Free response data also provided useful information to the program designers, including suggestions for improving online learning, specific topics of interest to potential students, and desires for project-based learning.

The advisory board for the Department of Retail, Hospitality, and Tourism Management includes retail, hospitality, and tourism businesses, such as Belk, Pilot Flying J, Tractor Supply Company, Cracker Barrel Country Store, InterContinental Hotels Group (IHG), McKibbon Hotel Management, and Blackberry Farm. The department also maintains close working relationships with professional organizations such as Tennessee Hospitality and Tourism Association, Greater Knoxville Hospitality Association, Greater Nashville Hospitality Association, Sevier County Hospitality and Tourism Association, and Visit Chattanooga Tourism Authority. Furthermore, the department’s collaboration with the Southern Hospitality Internship Program (SHIP) has enabled students to forge meaningful connections with businesses in Sevier County. Six letters of support were received from Avery Dennison, Connor Concepts, Greater Knoxville Hospitality Association, McKibbon Hospitality, Southern Hospitality Internship Program (SHIP), and VolShop.

**EXTERNAL JUDGMENT**

A virtual external review of the proposed program was conducted on November 18, 2024, by Dr. Mary Dawson, Associate Dean for Academic Affairs in the Conrad N. Hilton College of Global Hospitality Leadership at the University of Houston. The site visit included meetings with campus administrators, support staff, and faculty from UTK, as well as current UTK students and industry partners. Given the “thoroughness of the planning, the innovative curriculum, and the current individuals leading the program,” Dr. Dawson “highly recommend[ed] approval.” She added, “The program has the potential for exponential growth and to swiftly become a benchmark within the hospitality industry higher education online graduate programs,” and also noted the program’s “overwhelming support of the [institutional] administration and the hospitality/tourism industry.”

**PROGRAM COSTS AND REVENUES**

The proposed one-time and recurring expenditures as well as revenues for the Master of Science in Retail, Hospitality, and Tourism program are listed in Table 1. The proposed program expects relatively low start-up costs, with most recurring expenditures in the faculty and instructional staff category to support the growth of the program. The program anticipates being revenue-positive in Year 1.

**Table 1: Estimated Costs to Deliver the Proposed Program**

<i>Estimated Costs to Deliver the Proposed Program</i>						
<b>One-Time Expenditures</b>						
<b>Category</b>	<b>Planning</b>	<b>Year 1</b>	<b>Year 2</b>	<b>Year 3</b>	<b>Year 4</b>	<b>Year 5</b>
Faculty & Instructional Staff	\$45,000					
Non-Instructional Staff						
Graduate Assistants						
Accreditation						



Consultants	\$1,000					
Equipment						
Information Tech						
Library						
Marketing						
Facilities						
Travel						
Other						
<i>Total One-Time Expenditures</i>	<i>\$46,000</i>	<i>\$0</i>	<i>\$0</i>	<i>\$0</i>	<i>\$0</i>	<i>\$0</i>
<b>Recurring Expenditures</b>						
<b>Category</b>	<b>Planning</b>	<b>Year 1</b>	<b>Year 2</b>	<b>Year 3</b>	<b>Year 4</b>	<b>Year 5</b>
Faculty & Instructional Staff	\$11,653	\$16,883	\$17,671	\$17,931	\$120,619	\$124,118
Non-Instructional Staff	\$6,250	\$35,377	\$36,439	\$37,532	\$38,658	\$39,818
Graduate Assistants						
Accreditation						
Consultants						
Equipment						
Information Tech						
Library						
Marketing	\$8,000	\$8,000	\$8,000	\$8,000	\$8,000	\$8,000
Facilities						
Travel	\$3,000	\$3,000	\$3,500	\$3,500	\$4,000	\$4,000
Other						
<i>Total Recurring Expenditures</i>	<i>\$28,903</i>	<i>\$63,260</i>	<i>\$65,610</i>	<i>\$66,963</i>	<i>\$171,277</i>	<i>\$175,936</i>
<b>Grand Total (One-Time and Recurring)</b>	<b>\$74,903</b>	<b>\$63,260</b>	<b>\$65,610</b>	<b>\$66,963</b>	<b>\$171,277</b>	<b>\$175,936</b>
<b>Projected Revenues</b>						
<b>Category</b>	<b>Planning</b>	<b>Year 1</b>	<b>Year 2</b>	<b>Year 3</b>	<b>Year 4</b>	<b>Year 5</b>
Tuition		\$229,500	\$367,200	\$436,050	\$466,650	\$515,100
Grants	\$45,000*					
Other						

<b>Total Revenues</b>	<b>\$45,000</b>	<b>\$229,500</b>	<b>\$367,200</b>	<b>\$436,050</b>	<b>\$466,650</b>	<b>\$515,100</b>
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# TENNESSEE HIGHER EDUCATION COMMISSION

**REGULAR CALENDAR ITEM: I.F.**

**MEETING DATE:** May 15, 2025

**SUBJECT:** New Academic Program  
University of Tennessee, Martin  
Social Work, Master of Science (MSSW)

**ITEM TYPE:** Action

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## PROGRAM OVERVIEW

<b>Title and Designation</b>	Social Work, Master of Science (MSSW)
<b>Concentrations / Certifications</b>	Clinical Social Work with Rural Emphasis
<b>Accreditation</b>	The University of Tennessee, Martin will seek The Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) accreditation.
<b>CIP Code and Description</b>	<b>44.0701 (Social Work)</b> A program that prepares individuals for the professional practice of social welfare administration and counseling, and that focus on the study of organized means of providing basic support services for vulnerable individuals and groups. Includes instruction in social welfare policy; case work planning; social counseling and intervention strategies; administrative procedures and regulations; and specific applications in areas such as child welfare and family services, probation, employment services, and disability counseling.
<b>SOC Code and Title</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ 11-9151 Social and Community Service Managers</li><li>▪ 21-1013 Marriage and Family Therapists</li><li>▪ 21-1019 Counselors, All Other</li><li>▪ 21-1021 Child, Family, and School Social Workers</li><li>▪ 21-1022 Healthcare Social Workers</li><li>▪ 21-1023 Mental Health and Substance Abuse Social Workers</li><li>▪ 21-1029 Social Workers, All Other</li><li>▪ 21-1092 Probation Officers &amp; Correctional Treatment Specialists</li><li>▪ 25-1113 Social Work Teachers, Postsecondary</li></ul>
<b>Credit Hours</b>	30-60
<b>Implementation Date</b>	August 1, 2026
<b>Modality and Delivery Site</b>	Fully Online (synchronous and asynchronous delivery)
<b>Department/College</b>	College of Education, Health and Behavioral Science, Department of Behavioral Science.
<b>Governing Board Approval Date</b>	February 27-28, 2025

## **ALIGNMENT WITH STATE MASTER PLAN AND INSTITUTIONAL MISSION/STRATEGIC PLAN**

The University of Tennessee, Martin proposes a Master of Science in Social Work (MSSW) to complement its existing Bachelor of Science in Social Work (BSSW), which has existed since 1974 and is accredited by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE). The proposed MSSW will prepare master-level social workers for practice and will offer advanced education in issues specific to social work in rural areas, including rural mental health, substance abuse issues, accessibility to care, and rural administrative practice. The proposed MSSW program aligns with the THEC State Master Plan's acknowledgment of "the critical need for academic programs of distinction at the graduate and professional level to fully address Tennessee's economic development, workforce, and research needs." The proposed program addresses a regional need for qualified social workers, offers flexible pathways to completion for non-traditional and working students, and promotes family prosperity by offering potential career advancement to graduates.

The proposed MSSW aligns with three grand challenges identified in the University of Tennessee (UT) System's Strategic Plan for 2021-2025: Strengthening Rural Communities, Advancing K-12 Education, and Overcoming Addiction. The proposed program will strengthen rural communities by offering specialized training for rural social workers, will advance K-12 education by preparing school social workers, and will produce graduates capable of helping Tennesseans overcome addiction.

The proposed program also aligns with UTM's mission to advance "the regional and global community through scholarly activities, public service, and research" and to meet "lifelong education needs by providing graduate programs, distance learning opportunities, online course delivery, and other creative endeavors." The proposed program offers an online degree designed to accommodate all learners and to serve local, rural communities. Finally, the proposed MSSW program aligns with all five goals of UTM's strategic plan, by adding to the number of responsible citizens, improving employment opportunities for graduates, advancing UTM's reputation, and improving the vitality and prosperity of West Tennessee through service and advocacy.

## **PROGRAM DUPLICATION**

Ten Master of Social Work (MSW) and Master of Science in Social Work (MSSW) programs are offered in Tennessee, seven of which are at public institutions: Austin Peay State University; East Tennessee State University; Tennessee State University; University of Memphis; University of Tennessee, Chattanooga; and University of Tennessee, Knoxville. The proposed program is distinctive from existing programs because of the focus on clinical practice with a rural emphasis. Additionally, the program will prepare graduates to address pronounced challenges in rural West Tennessee, such as poverty, unemployment, abuse, addiction, isolation, limited or no public transportation, and inadequate health and mental health services.

## **WORKFORCE ALIGNMENT**

According to the 2024 Tennessee's Academic Supply for Occupational Demand Report, there is a substantial and growing demand for social workers in Northwest Tennessee and throughout the state, with some areas of social work experiencing significant increases in job advertisements. According to the Rural Health Information Hub, nearly all counties in Tennessee are Mental Health Professional Shortage Areas (HPSAs), while research conducted by the National Association of State Mental Health Program Institute, Inc. (NRI) found that 38 of the 50 states—including Tennessee—have at least a moderate workforce shortage in their psychiatric hospital system. In addition, the

America's Health Rankings Annual Report ranks Tennessee 45<sup>th</sup> among the 50 states for access to mental health professionals with a rate of approximately 200 mental health providers per 100,000 residents of Tennessee compared to the national rate of 305 mental health providers per 100,000.

The 2024 U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics Occupational Outlook Handbook notes that "employment in community and social occupations is projected to grow faster than the national average and experience 281,600 annual openings from 2022 to 2032. Social work job openings, specifically, are expected to grow by 13%—much faster than the average for all occupations (which is 3%). Certain types of social work, such as mental health, substance abuse, and behavioral disorders, anticipate an average growth rate of 18%. The proposed program is meant to prepare students to work in these areas, which are a significant need in rural areas of Tennessee. Jobs 4 Tennessee identified long-term growth from 2020-2024 for social workers, by about 19.7% or 80,000 jobs.

The Tennessee Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services Planning and Policy Council conducted a Needs Assessment Summary which noted that in all regions across the state of Tennessee there was demonstrated need for an increase in the number of mental health and substance abuse professionals. Region 6, where UTM is located, had six pressing needs identified, such as adolescent inpatient psychiatric care, transportation support, low barrier and affordable housing, transportation for substance abuse treatment, substance abuse treatment access for veterans and their families, and access for adolescent substance abuse treatment. Master's level trained social workers through the proposed program can address not only the mental health aspects of these needs, but also are equipped to tackle the broader concerns that accompany them, such as resource and community development.

## CURRICULUM

The proposed Master of Science in Social Work will have two paths, one of which will be an accelerated 30 credit hour program for students that have already obtained an undergraduate degree in social work. Students that do not already have a social work background will be required to complete 60 credit hours to receive the MSSW. Students in both paths can enroll full-time or part-time, and time to completion is anticipated to be one calendar year to three years at most.

The proposed program will include an 18 credit hour core for students on the accelerated track and a 46 credit hour core for students without prior social work training. Students will be placed in a clinical placement during their advanced standing year of study, their field placement experience will also provide hands-on clinical experience under the supervision of a Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW) providing additional guidance and mentorship for the successful completion of the licensing exam. To accommodate the diverse needs of students, including working professionals and recent graduates, the Master of Science in Social Work (MSSW) Program will be offered online, utilizing synchronous and asynchronous delivery methods.

## PROJECTED ENROLLMENT AND GRADUATION

	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	2029-30
<b>Enrollment</b>	25	31	42	48	56
<b>Graduates</b>	17	21	21	22	29

## STUDENT INTEREST AND COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

Three interest surveys for a Master of Science in Social Work were administered between 2015 and 2024 to evaluate student interest among current University of Tennessee, Martin (UTM) students and UTM undergraduate social work alumni. The surveys resulted in 230 respondents in 2015, 199 respondents in 2020, and 67 respondents in 2024. Key findings from the most recent 2024 interest survey show that among current students, 84% (N=56) expressed they were “Very Likely” to participate in an accelerated undergraduate to master’s degree option (4 + 1 degree program) in Social Work at UTM. Forty-three respondents (64%) reported that they would be “Very Likely” to enroll in the proposed MSSW program at UTM in the next five years. Among current students, 45 respondents (67%) reported that they desire to earn a graduate degree in an online course format, and 41 current student respondents (67%) reported that the clinical track/specialization would be their top pick of specialization.

Locally, in 2020 and 2024, UT Martin administered an employer survey among all field agencies affiliated with their existing social work program. The response rate for the survey was 47% (38 responses) for 2024, and 3 % (15 responses) for 2020. Eighty-three percent (n=13) and 71% (n=27) of employer respondents in 2020 and 2024, respectively, indicated that their organization experienced difficulty finding master’s level social workers to hire. In addition, 54% of 2024 respondents (n=21) reported an increase in their organizational need for master-level social workers over the next five years, and 83% of 2024 respondents (n=32) cited an “insufficient number of master’s level applicants” when asked to identify common organizational hiring challenges.

The proposed MSSW Program will build upon existing partnerships established through the undergraduate social work program at UTM. Additional partnerships will be leveraged from local agencies, healthcare providers, community mental health centers, social and public service agencies, and schools in rural areas. The community and industry partnerships will serve to provide students with hands-on experience and to foster collaboration in addressing the social service needs of those communities. Seven letters of support were received from the following: Carey Counseling Center, Inc., Pathways Behavioral Health, Student Health & Counseling Services at UTM, Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth, Healthy Families Tennessee, and St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital.

## EXTERNAL JUDGMENT

A virtual external review of the proposed program was conducted on November 21, 2024, by Dr. Deana Morrow, Director and Eberly Family Professor for Outstanding Public Service in the School of Social Work at West Virginia University. The site visit included meetings with campus administrators and faculty from UTM, as well as current UTM students and industry partners.

Dr. Morrow recommended approval of the proposed program, noting that “the specialization in clinical practice with a rural emphasis is unique and highly appropriate to northwestern Tennessee and the surrounding region.” She added that the curriculum is “well-developed and presents as an integrated whole consistent with Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) accreditation standards.” She noted the curriculum plan to be “impressive and relevant to the documented behavioral health and addictions treatment needs in the state and region,” and “contemporary for current and future practice implications in the social work discipline.”

## PROGRAM COSTS AND REVENUES

The proposed one-time and recurring expenditures as well as projected revenue for the Master of Science in Social Work (MSSW) program are listed in Table 1. The MSSW proposed program costs are exceptionally low due to funding of three faculty positions through existing budget lines. Funding for only one new position is budgeted for Year 2 (filling a fourth faculty position). The costs for the proposed MSSW also include a part-time administrative assistant, as well as one graduate assistant position, which will include a tuition waiver and salary.

**Table 1: Estimated Costs to Deliver the Proposed Program**

<b><i>Estimated Costs to Deliver the Proposed Program</i></b>							
<b>One-Time Expenditures</b>							
<b>Category</b>	<b>Planning Year 1</b>	<b>Planning Year 2</b>	<b>Year 1</b>	<b>Year 2</b>	<b>Year 3</b>	<b>Year 4</b>	<b>Year 5</b>
Faculty & Instructional Staff (Faculty Lead)							
Accreditation		\$12,500	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000		
Consultants	\$1,200						
Equipment				\$500		\$2,500	\$3,000
Information Tech							
Library							
Marketing							
Facilities							
Travel							
Other							
<i>Total One-Time Expenditures</i>	<i>\$1,200</i>	<i>\$12,500</i>	<i>\$10,000</i>	<i>\$10,500</i>	<i>\$10,000</i>	<i>\$2,500</i>	<i>\$3,000</i>
<b>Recurring Expenditures</b>							
<b>Category</b>	<b>Planning Year 1</b>	<b>Planning Year 2</b>	<b>Year 1</b>	<b>Year 2</b>	<b>Year 3</b>	<b>Year 4</b>	<b>Year 5</b>
Faculty & Instructional Staff		\$18,108	\$18,108	\$91,198	\$80,750	\$82,829	\$85,155
Non-instructional Staff			\$25,249	\$26,006	\$26,786	\$27,589	\$28,417
Graduate Assistants				\$17,526	\$17,526	\$17,526	\$17,526
Accreditation					\$7,750	\$7,750	\$7,750
Consultants							
Equipment							
Information Tech							

Library							
Marketing			\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000
Facilities							
Travel	\$2,500	\$2,500	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$15,000
Other			\$4,000	\$5,000	\$6,000	\$7,000	\$7,000
<i>Total Recurring Expenditures</i>	\$2,500	\$20,608	\$57,357	\$149,730	\$153,812	\$157,694	\$165,848
<b>Grand Total (One-Time and Recurring)</b>	<b>\$3,700</b>	<b>\$33,108</b>	<b>\$67,357</b>	<b>\$160,230</b>	<b>\$163,812</b>	<b>\$160,194</b>	<b>\$168,848</b>
<b>Projected Revenue</b>							
<b>Category</b>	<b>Planning Year</b>	<b>Planning Year 2</b>	<b>Year 1</b>	<b>Year 2</b>	<b>Year 3</b>	<b>Year 4</b>	<b>Year 5</b>
Tuition			\$300,219	\$371,964	\$482,148	\$522,264	\$637,200
Grants							
Other							
<b>Total Revenues</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$300,219</b>	<b>\$371,964</b>	<b>\$482,148</b>	<b>\$522,264</b>	<b>\$637,200</b>





# TENNESSEE HIGHER EDUCATION COMMISSION

**REGULAR CALENDAR ITEM: I.G.**

**MEETING DATE:** May 15, 2025

**SUBJECT:** New Academic Program  
University of Tennessee, Knoxville  
Sustainability, Master of Science (MS)

**ITEM TYPE:** Action

## PROGRAM OVERVIEW

<b>Title and Designation</b>	Sustainability, Master of Science (MS)
<b>Concentrations</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Sustainable Business Practices</li><li>2. Governance and Policy</li><li>3. Ecological Sustainability</li><li>4. Community Engagement and Social Justice</li><li>5. Sustainable Development</li><li>6. Urban Sustainability</li><li>7. Sustainable Water Management</li><li>8. Sustainable Technologies</li><li>9. Climate Change and Adaptation</li></ol>
<b>Accreditation</b>	No programmatic accreditation applicable.
<b>CIP Code and Description</b>	<b>30.3301 (Sustainability Studies):</b> A program that focuses on the concept of sustainability from an interdisciplinary perspective. Includes instruction in sustainable development, environmental policies, ethics, ecology, landscape architecture, city and regional planning, economics, natural resources, sociology, and anthropology. Examples: Sustainability, Sustainable Living, Organizational and Environmental Sustainability, and Sustainability Studies.
<b>SOC Code and Title</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ 11-9121 -- Natural Sciences Managers</li><li>▪ 19-1031 -- Conservation Scientists</li><li>▪ 19-2041 -- Environmental Scientists and Specialists, Including Health</li><li>▪ 19-3051-- Urban and Regional Planners</li><li>▪ 19-3099 -- Social Scientists and Related Workers, All Other</li><li>▪ 19-4042 -- Environmental Science &amp; Protection Technicians, Including Health</li><li>▪ 25-1199 -- Postsecondary Teachers, All Other</li></ul>
<b>Credit Hours</b>	30
<b>Implementation Date</b>	August 1, 2025
<b>Modality and Delivery Site</b>	Majority On-Ground (Hybrid)
<b>Department/College</b>	College of Emerging and Collaborative Studies (CECS)
<b>Governing Board Approval Date</b>	February 27-28, 2025

## **ALIGNMENT WITH STATE MASTER PLAN AND INSTITUTIONAL MISSION/STRATEGIC PLAN**

The proposed Master of Science (MS) in Sustainability at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville (UTK) will be housed in the College of Emerging and Collaborative Studies (CECS), which engages students in new fields of study that tend to be highly interdisciplinary and therefore, do not fit within conventional colleges or departments on campus. The proposed program was designed by a curriculum committee of 14 faculty members who teach sustainability-related courses across seven colleges and is intended to meet increasing demand for sustainability professionals in industry, academics, and government. The Sustainability, MS will offer a foundational understanding of sustainability concepts, data sources, and tools through interdisciplinary instruction.

The Sustainability, MS aligns with the State Master Plan for Higher Education by offering a degree designed to address workforce demand in the state, specifically by preparing students for the “future workforce” in sustainability. The proposed program was developed in partnership with industry, aligning with imperatives for “leveraging employer and workforce partnerships” as well as preparing students for the “future of work.” Further, the program is intended to meet the needs of historically underserved students, including older and/or non-traditional students, through its flexible modality and completion timeline. The program aligns with UTK’s mission to “advance the prosperity, well-being, and vitality of communities across Tennessee and around the world through our research, teaching, service, and engagement.” The proposed Sustainability, MS will emphasize community engagement and hands-on learning and community impact and will also strengthen ties with partners like the Oak Ridge National Laboratory. Further, the program aligns with UTK’s goal of preparing its graduates to be industry, government, and community leaders.

## **PROGRAM DUPLICATION**

The proposed program would be the first Master of Science in Sustainability offered at a public institution in Tennessee. Lipscomb University offers a Sustainability, MS, however, UTK’s proposed program differs due to the wide range of range of concentrations available for students.

## **WORKFORCE ALIGNMENT**

The proposed program addresses growing need across various sustainability sectors, which are anticipated to increase by 8.6% through 2028, translating to 39,621 jobs regionally. The largest area of employment for sustainability is as natural science managers, environmental and health scientists, and urban/regional planners. Several occupations aligned to the proposed program—including natural sciences managers, conservation scientists, environmental scientists and specialists, and environmental science and protection technicians—are categorized as O\*NET Bright Outlooks (expected to have 100,000+ openings from 2022-2032 and to grow much faster than average occupations).

Data from Lightcast, a labor market analytics firm, showed 26,080 unique job postings from October 2023—September 2024 for sustainability positions. Employer demand is highest in Virginia and Florida, and moderate in Tennessee, totaling 2,832 jobs in the state. Knoxville, Tennessee ranked fourth for unique job posting, with 514 unique job ads available when analysis was conducted.

## **CURRICULUM**

The proposed Master of Science in Sustainability will be offered primarily on-ground, with some online course options, and will consist of 30 credit hours, 12 of which will be core courses. Students

will complete nine credit hours in two of the nine proposed concentrations (18 credit hours total). All students will complete three to six credit hours of internship, research, or thesis, providing hands-on experience with the application of content learned in core classes. The proposed Sustainability, MS is designed for recent graduates of bachelor's programs and returning career professionals interested in furthering their academic credentials, particularly those working in industry and government fields where sustainability is emerging as a critical area of concern.

The proposed program's curriculum is designed to equip students with practical skills and experiences that make them competitive in a variety of career paths, including those that require interdisciplinary expertise, and draws on existing expertise at UTK across 20 distinct disciplines. Students will benefit from the program's interdisciplinarity, and also from existing college staff such as the Director of Partnerships and Economic Engagement, who partners with industry to provide students with real-world projects.

## PROJECTED ENROLLMENT AND GRADUATION

	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	2029-30
<b>Enrollment</b>	10	25	40	60	80
<b>Graduates</b>	0	9	23	36	53

## STUDENT INTEREST AND COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

An interest survey for the proposed program was administered to undergraduate students in Geology and Environmental Studies, and to Sustainability majors at UTK on July 1 and July 25, 2024, via listserv and in three summer courses. The survey resulted in 38 respondents completing the survey as of July 25, 2024, and found that 47% (n=18) expressed that they are "Extremely Likely" to be interested in pursuing the proposed Sustainability, MS program. Nationally, the market for master's degrees in sustainability exceeds 15,000 completions per year, while the southeast regional market share is 17% (2,746), demonstrating a scope for growth.

The proposed Sustainability, MS program builds upon existing industry and community support for the College of Emerging Collaborative Studies (CECS). Letters of support indicate interest in the transdisciplinary approach of the degree as well as willingness to support internship opportunities. Support letters were provided by Holocene Climate Corporation; US Solar Alliance Southeast, LLC; Chattanooga Technology Council (ChaTech); DENSO International America, Inc.; EPB (formerly Electric Power Board) of Chattanooga; Tullahoma Area Economic Development Corporation; PYA, P.C Healthcare Consulting; Truist Bank; United Cleanup Oak Ridge, LLC; Eastman Chemical Company; and Volkswagen Group of America.

## EXTERNAL JUDGMENT

A virtual external review of the proposed program was conducted on December 4, 2024, by Dr. Joe Árvai, the Dana and David Dornsife Professor of Psychology, Biological Sciences, and Environmental Studies and Director of the Wrigley Institute for Environment and Sustainability at the University of Southern California. The site visit included meetings with university leadership, faculty, and students, as well as industry and community partners. Dr. Árvai praised the proposed program for its "clever and robust" curriculum and the structure of the program and college, which will allow students to "take advantage of contextual and interdisciplinary depth that is being developed within the CECS and the disciplinary depth that exists within units at UTK." Dr. Árvai also noted that in addition to

being unique, the required concentrations and collaborative experiences for students working across disciplines will “result in graduates with diversified portfolios of knowledge which should make them even more competitive for jobs.” Dr. Árvai recommended approval of the proposed program, writing that the proposed program is “well justified, carefully constructed, and clear.”

## PROGRAM COSTS AND REVENUES

The proposed expenditures for the MS in Sustainability are listed in Table 1 below. Most expenditures are related to the hiring of a full-time Professor of Teaching to teach core courses in the proposed program, and to support the hiring of a Faculty Fellow to develop the curriculum in the planning year. The program will also utilize graders, and since these positions will be paid hourly rather than through assistantships, the costs are included under the “Faculty & Instructional Staff” section.

**Table 1: Estimated Costs to Deliver the Proposed Program**

<b><i>Estimated Costs to Deliver the Proposed Program</i></b>						
<b>One-Time Expenditures</b>						
<b>Category</b>	<b>Planning</b>	<b>Year 1</b>	<b>Year 2</b>	<b>Year 3</b>	<b>Year 4</b>	<b>Year 5</b>
Faculty & Instructional Staff	\$20,000					
Non-Instructional Staff						
Graduate Assistants						
Accreditation						
Consultants	\$2,000					
Equipment						
Information Tech		\$2,500				
Library						
Marketing						
Facilities						
Travel						
Other						
<b><i>Total One-Time Expenditures</i></b>	<b><i>\$22,000</i></b>	<b><i>\$2,500</i></b>	<b><i>\$0</i></b>	<b><i>\$0</i></b>	<b><i>\$0</i></b>	<b><i>\$0</i></b>
<b>Recurring Expenditures</b>						
<b>Category</b>	<b>Planning</b>	<b>Year 1</b>	<b>Year 2</b>	<b>Year 3</b>	<b>Year 4</b>	<b>Year 5</b>
Faculty & Instructional Staff	\$0	\$168,144	\$179,492	\$194,189	\$205,839	\$220,846

Non-Instructional Staff		\$3,200	\$9,600	\$19,200	\$25,600	\$35,200
Graduate Assistants						
Accreditation						
Consultants						
Equipment						
Information Tech						
Library						
Marketing		\$2,000	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$2,000
Facilities						
Travel						
Other						
<i>Total Recurring Expenditures</i>	\$0	\$173,344	\$191,0092	\$215,389	\$233,439	\$258,046
<b>Grand Total (One-Time and Recurring)</b>	<b>\$22,000</b>	<b>\$175,844</b>	<b>\$191,092</b>	<b>\$215,389</b>	<b>\$233,439</b>	<b>\$258,046</b>
<b>Projected Revenues</b>						
<b>Category</b>	<b>Planning</b>	<b>Year 1</b>	<b>Year 2</b>	<b>Year 3</b>	<b>Year 4</b>	<b>Year 5</b>
Tuition		\$172,188	\$533,783	\$952,774	\$1,653,005	\$1,985,902
Grants						
Other						
<b>Total Revenues</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$172,188</b>	<b>\$533,783</b>	<b>\$952,774</b>	<b>\$1,653,005</b>	<b>\$1,985,902</b>



# TENNESSEE HIGHER EDUCATION COMMISSION

REGULAR CALENDAR ITEM: I.H.

**MEETING DATE:** May 15, 2025

**SUBJECT:** New Academic Program  
University of Tennessee, Knoxville  
Communication and Information, Bachelor of Science (BS)

**ITEM TYPE:** Action

## PROGRAM OVERVIEW

<b>Title and Designation</b>	Communication and Information, Bachelor of Science (BS)
<b>Concentrations / Certifications</b>	No concentrations are proposed.
<b>Accreditation</b>	No programmatic accreditation applicable.
<b>CIP Code and Description</b>	<b>09.9999 (communication, Journalism, and Related Programs, Other)</b> Any instructional program in communication, journalism, and related fields not listed above.
<b>SOC Code and Title</b>	<b>Proposed SOC Code(s):</b> 27-3041 (Editors) 27-3043 (Writers and Authors) 27-3099 (Media and Communication Workers, All Other) 11-2011 (Advertising and Promotions Managers) 11-2032 (Public Relations Manager) 27-3030 (Public Relations Specialists) 27-3043 (Writers and Authors) 27-3099 (Media and Communication Workers, All Other)
<b>Credit Hours</b>	120
<b>Implementation Date</b>	August 1, 2025
<b>Modality and Delivery Site</b>	Fully Online
<b>Department/College</b>	College of Communication and Information
<b>Governing Board Approval Date</b>	February 27-28, 2025

## ALIGNMENT WITH STATE MASTER PLAN AND INSTITUTIONAL MISSION/STRATEGIC PLAN

Over 900,000 Tennesseans have earned some college credit but do not have a degree, and the College of Communication and Information (CCI) at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville (UTK) proposes an online, asynchronous Bachelor of Science (BS) in Communication and Information program designed to appeal to transfer students that will advance Tennessee's higher education completion goals and to meet workforce needs in an occupation expected to grow 6% by 2031

according to Bureau of Labor Statistic data. The proposed Communication and Information, BS will provide comprehensive and representative knowledge and skills from faculty across the college, preparing students for a range of rapidly growing career paths in communications and information systems. UTK's College of Communication and Information currently offers a number of undergraduate programs in four communication disciplines: advertising and public relations, communication studies, information sciences, and journalism and electronic media. The proposed program would offer courses from all four communication disciplines, thereby providing broad skill sets to students that are applicable in many careers and is designed facilitate seamless transfer from all current Tennessee Transfer Pathways (TTPs).

The proposed program aligns with the THEC State Master Plan for Higher Education's goals of student access and completion, family prosperity (affordability and outreach to adults), and the future of work. The proposed program promotes completion by reducing barriers and offering an affordable distance education degree. The program is intended to serve non-traditional and transfer students, and to make attaining a four-year degree more attainable via distance education. Finally, the proposed program will also increase enrollment in a major leading to high-demand jobs. Communication and communicating data are two skills already in wide demand by employers according to the New Foundation Skills of the Digital Economy, a report produced by workforce data firm, Lightcast. Furthermore, the proposed program aligns with the mission of the University of Tennessee System to serve the people of Tennessee "through discover, communication and application of knowledge." The proposed program will prepare students for various communication careers to meet current and future workforce demands.

Additionally, the proposed program addresses the first goal of the UTK vision: Cultivating the Volunteer Experience. The Communication and Information, BS seeks to provide "high-quality educational opportunities for people at every stage of life, whenever and wherever they seek to learn," by offering a flexible, online degree for returning students that is "collaborative, inquiry-based, experiential, affordable, and relevant." The proposed program intends to be "responsive to the needs of learners," and offers "curricular innovations that align with 21<sup>st</sup>-century workforce needs" while ensuring access "to communities across Tennessee and beyond." The proposed program also aligns with emphasis on deepening and extending the university's ability to connect with Tennesseans as outlined in the fifth goal of the vision: "Embodying the Modern R1, Land Grant University" by offering an accessible online degree program and identifying community needs and activating university resources to meet those needs.

## **PROGRAM DUPLICATION**

Undergraduate programs in communication and adjacent fields are offered at nine public institutions in Tennessee (Austin Peay State University, East Tennessee State University, Middle Tennessee State University, Tennessee State University, Tennessee Technological University, University of Memphis, University of Tennessee, Chattanooga, UTK, and University of Tennessee, Martin). However, none of these programs integrate communication studies theory; advertising and public relations; journalism and media; and information sciences in a single program, as these are typically organized as discrete degree programs, making the proposed program distinct from current offerings.

## **WORKFORCE ALIGNMENT**

The Summer 2022 Tennessee Business Leaders Survey found that seven of ten respondents reported an insufficient supply of appropriately trained workers. Lightcast data on the

communication sector indicates that employers are seeking qualified candidates with skills in journalism, marketing, social media strategy and creation, copywriting, and proofreading. The proposed program intends to create graduates with these skills, and to meet the completion goals among students with some college but no degree. Students who complete the proposed degree would be suited for roles such as communication directors, content creators, marketing managers, and social media managers.

Communication and communicating data are two skills in wide demand by employers according to the “New Foundation Skills of the Digital Economy,” as well as a recent LinkedIn report. Additionally, the State of Tennessee created a list of regional in-demand occupations mapped to skill sets required according to employers. Of the Top 30 jobs identified that require a bachelor’s degree, all 30 required moderate to advanced interpersonal skills, service orientation, and persuasive skills, all of which will be honed by the proposed program. Providing students with communication and digital skills allows for greater adaptability in their careers, and the interdisciplinary nature of the program will provide a wide range of skills. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, media and communication positions are expected to grow by 4% through 2032, with openings around 114,300 each year due to growth and other factors (leaving profession, retirement). Some communication roles, particularly those in marketing, will likely experience faster-than-average job growth.

## CURRICULUM

The proposed program is designed for transfer students who have completed an Associate of Science, Associate of Arts, Associate of Fine Arts, or Associate of Science in Teaching from a public Tennessee community college and will require an additional 60 credit hours from UTK. Of the 60 required credit hours at UTK, 48 credit hours will be communication and information coursework and 12 credit hours of general electives will be required. Students who enroll without an associate’s degree will be responsible for completing courses to reach 120 credit hours in alignment with the requirements stipulated by UTK’s general education program, the Volunteer Core. Students in the proposed program will receive assistance in securing an internship from the college’s Director of Career Development as well as the Vol Remote Internship program, which matches students interested in remote work with non-profits in need of additional communication, content creation, and social media strategy development assistance.

The proposed program was developed based on current curriculum in the College of Communication and Information with a focus on adapting these courses to fit an online program. The shift to an online, asynchronous degree will also be enhanced by UTK’s partnership with Arizona State University, which has allowed for an expansion of online course offerings across campus. The College has experience with offering online education and has offered an online master’s degree with a concentration in Strategic and Digital Communication since 2020.

## PROJECTED ENROLLMENT AND GRADUATION

	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	2029-30
<b>Enrollment</b>	25	58	86	104	127
<b>Graduates</b>	0	20	41	66	79



STUDENT INTEREST AND COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

A feasibility study was conducted in Summer 2023 among transfer students to the College of Communication and Information (n=179) between Fall 2020 and Summer 2023. Students were asked if an online degree program in communication and information would have appealed to them. Of the twenty respondents, 88% (N=18) indicated that they would have considered an online asynchronous degree in communication and information.

The College of Communication and Information has an Alumni Board of Visitors to advise on the proposed program. Additionally, the college has established relationships with internship providers, such as Discovery Communications, Oak Ridge National Laboratory, and TV and media outlets. Current industry partners include Axle Logistics, WBIR, the Tombras Group, and Insight Global, and the college will continue to leverage these relationships to provide experiential learning opportunities—virtual and in person—to students who enroll in the proposed program. Letters of industry support were provided by: SKDK (a public affairs and political consulting firm), the College of Communication and Information Board of Visitors, Pellissippi State Community College, the Pilot Company, and tnAchieves.

EXTERNAL JUDGMENT

A virtual external review of the proposed program was conducted on November 13, 2024, by Dr. Jennifer Greer, Dean of the College of Communication and Information at the University of Kentucky. The site visit included meetings with campus administrators, support staff, and faculty from UTK, as well as current and potential UTK students and industry partners. Dr. Greer strongly recommended approval of the proposed program, adding, “I see this interdisciplinary online asynchronous degree option as a valuable addition to the strategic goals of all parties to serve the career-readiness needs of Tennesseans.” Furthermore, Dr. Greer assessed that the program “will serve virtually every organization and industry in the state, as CCI graduates are well-prepared and vitally needed to work in roles across myriad fields.” Dr. Greer commended the leadership and faculty for their commitment to the “mission of this degree” that is “a truly interdisciplinary program that will be unique not only in Tennessee, but nationwide.”

PROGRAM COSTS AND REVENUES

The proposed one-time and recurring expenditures as well as revenues for the Bachelor of Science in Communication and Information program are listed in Table 1. The bulk of costs for the proposed program are in faculty and staff resources, including four professor of practice positions over the first five years and an advisor to be hired in Year 2 as the program grows. The program projects being revenue positive in Year 2.

Table 1: Estimated Costs to Deliver the Proposed Program

Estimated Costs to Deliver the Proposed Program						
One-Time Expenditures						
Category	Planning	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Faculty & Instructional Staff	\$1,000	\$12,000	\$17,000	\$10,000	\$5,000	\$5,000
Non-Instructional Staff						

Graduate Assistants						
Accreditation						
Consultants	\$3,000					
Equipment		\$10,500		\$10,500		
Information Tech						
Library						
Marketing		\$5,000				
Facilities						
Travel						
Other						
<i>Total One-Time Expenditures</i>	<i>\$4,000</i>	<i>\$27,500</i>	<i>\$17,000</i>	<i>\$20,500</i>	<i>\$5,000</i>	<i>\$5,000</i>
<b>Recurring Expenditures</b>						
<b>Category</b>	<b>Planning</b>	<b>Year 1</b>	<b>Year 2</b>	<b>Year 3</b>	<b>Year 4</b>	<b>Year 5</b>
Faculty & Instructional Staff		\$150,000	\$152,250	\$300,000	\$304,500	\$309,067
Non-Instructional Staff			\$62,500	\$63,437	\$64,388	\$65,353
Graduate Assistants						
Accreditation						
Consultants						
Equipment						
Information Tech						
Library						
Marketing			\$12,000	\$12,000	\$12,000	\$12,000
Facilities						
Travel		\$7,500	\$7,500	\$7,500	\$5,000	\$2,500
Other						
<i>Total Recurring Expenditures</i>	<i>\$0</i>	<i>\$157,500</i>	<i>\$234,250</i>	<i>\$382,937</i>	<i>\$385,888</i>	<i>\$391,920</i>
<b>Grand Total (One-Time and Recurring)</b>	<b>\$4,000</b>	<b>\$185,000</b>	<b>\$251,250</b>	<b>\$403,437</b>	<b>\$390,888</b>	<b>\$388,920</b>
<b>Projected Revenues</b>						
<b>Category</b>	<b>Planning</b>	<b>Year 1</b>	<b>Year 2</b>	<b>Year 3</b>	<b>Year 4</b>	<b>Year 5</b>
Tuition		\$280,382	\$640,175	\$962,493	\$1,241,404	\$1,502,002

Grants						
Other						
<b>Total Revenues</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$280,382</b>	<b>\$640,175</b>	<b>\$962,493</b>	<b>\$1,241,404</b>	<b>\$1,502,002</b>



# TENNESSEE HIGHER EDUCATION COMMISSION

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REGULAR CALENDAR ITEM: II.

**MEETING DATE:** May 15, 2025  
**SUBJECT:** Legislative Update  
**ITEM TYPE:** Information

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## Presentation

Colleen Ellis, Director of State Government Relations, will present the Commission with an update on key legislation passed during the 2025 Session of the 114<sup>th</sup> General Assembly pertinent to the Tennessee Higher Education Commission and the statewide higher education enterprise.



# TENNESSEE HIGHER EDUCATION COMMISSION

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REGULAR CALENDAR ITEM: III.

**MEETING DATE:** May 15, 2025

**SUBJECT:** Academic Policy Revision: Academic Policy A1.4: Off-Campus Instruction

**ITEM TYPE:** Action

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## BACKGROUND

Pursuant to Tenn. Code Ann. § 49-7-202(q)(3), the Tennessee Higher Education Commission (THEC) is to review and approve or disapprove all proposals for off-campus locations at public institutions. Public Chapter 186 of the 114<sup>th</sup> General Assembly revises the statute to allow the Commission to delegate approval authority for off-campus locations to the Executive Director. The proposed changes to the policy were drafted to reflect this shift and incorporate feedback from institutional and system-level stakeholders, including off-campus administrators and chief academic officers.

Significant changes in the proposed policy include:

- Currently, THEC has two policies that delineate the requirements for off-campus approval: *A1.4A – Off-Campus Instruction for Community Colleges and Universities* and *A1.4B – Off-Campus Instruction for Tennessee Colleges of Applied Technology*. In an effort to streamline policies and processes, THEC is proposing combining the two policies into one new policy: *A1.4 Off-Campus Instruction*.
- The proposed policy change includes delegated authority to THEC's Executive Director for all off-campus locations.
- Approval requirements have been streamlined across the different types of off-campus locations and aligned to the newly launched off-campus portal.
- Notification requirements have been adjusted to ensure accurate data collection for THEC's off-campus portal and academic program inventory.

Attachment A provides a redlined version of the proposed changes and Attachment B provides a clean version of the amended policy.

## ATTACHMENT A: Redlined Policy Revision

**Section Title:** Academic Policies  
**Policy Title:** Off-Campus Instruction  
**Policy Number:** A 1.4

**1.4.1** **Scope and Purpose.** Pursuant to T.C.A. §49-7-202(q)(3), the Tennessee Higher Education Commission (THEC) is to review and approve or disapprove all proposals for off-campus locations at all public institutions including universities, community colleges, and colleges of applied technology.

The Commission delegates the authority for review and approval of off-campus locations to the Executive Director. The Executive Director maintains the discretion to refer an off-campus location to the Commission for approval. Students may not enroll in any new off-campus location, nor may any off-campus location be advertised by any public institution prior to THEC approval.

### ~~1.4A.2A~~ **Definitions.**

~~**Off-Campus Center** — is a location that is geographically apart from the main campus where students can enroll and complete academic programs. There must be a continuing administrative presence, evidenced by at least one full-time or part-time administrator housed on-site.~~

~~**Off-Campus Site** — is a physical space that is used to offer credit enrollment. Some examples of typical offerings at off-campus sites include dual enrollment or dual credit offerings; workforce development opportunities; and short-term, specific instructional needs. An off-campus site does not offer all courses necessary to complete an academic program.~~

~~**Academic Program** — is one that culminates in a certificate (academic, technical, or graduate); associate degree, bachelor's degree, or graduate degree (master's, professional, or doctorate).~~

~~**1.4A.3A** **Locations Subject to Approval.** Proposals for off-campus centers and off-campus sites will be subject to review and approval under this policy. Proposal formats appropriate to the following requested action are available on the THEC website:~~

- ~~• Establish an Off-Campus Center; and~~
- ~~• Establish an Off-Campus Site.~~

### **1.4.2** **Locations Subject to Approval.**

**Branch Campus:** A branch campus is a location affiliated with a college of applied technology and is operated under the supervision of a full-time, on-site, local administrator who reports to the chief administrative officer at the main campus.

**Extension Campus:** An extension campus is a location affiliated with a college of applied technology within a fifty-mile radius of the main campus. Direct supervision and control are provided from the main campus, and the staff is limited primarily to instructors and support staff.

**Instructional Service Center:** An instructional service center is a location affiliated with a college of applied technology that serves employers and the public for the delivery of programs or portions of programs to meet a workforce need. An instructional service center must be a joint venture between the institution and an employer or another educational agency and must be located within the geographic service area designated by the governing board of the institution. Appropriate student services must be available on-site, and the full range of services must be made accessible to participating students at the main campus.

**Off-Campus Center:** An off-campus center is a location affiliated with a public community college or university that is geographically apart from the main campus where students can enroll and complete at least one academic program. There must be a continuing administrative presence, evidenced by at least one full-time or part-time administrator housed on-site.

**Off-Campus Site:** An off-campus site is a physical space affiliated with a university, community college, or college of applied technology that is used to offer credit enrollment geographically apart from the main campus. Some examples of typical offerings at off-campus sites include dual enrollment or dual credit offerings; workforce development opportunities; and short-term, specific instructional needs.

### 1.4.3

**No Unnecessary Duplication.** THEC will not approve the establishment of an off-campus location if the proposed delivery of instructional services could reasonably occur through existing institutions or other off-campus locations. It is expected that institutions and/or systems will resolve any conflicts between the institutions impacted by the proposed off-campus location submission prior to submission of the off-campus location request to THEC.

An institution contemplating the creation of an off-campus location must review the THEC off-campus inventory to avoid duplication. The institution must communicate its proposal to the impacted institution(s) in writing prior to the submission of the proposal to THEC. Impacted institutions will have 10 business days to review and provide feedback to the requesting institution. Requesting institutions shall document any communications and agreements with impacted institutions in the off-campus request to THEC. Impacted institutions should also submit any unresolved objections to the proposed off-campus location to the THEC Executive Director.

### 1.4.4

**Exclusions to the Off-Campus Instruction Policy.** The following offerings and/or locations are excluded from this off-campus location policy:

- Clinical training sites with no didactic instruction
- Continuing education coursework
- Non-credit coursework, including non-degree apprenticeship
- Online offerings, unless the student is required to be at the location (synchronously or asynchronously) to receive instruction
- Study abroad coursework
- Student teaching locations and degree apprenticeship locations with no instruction on-site

#### 1.4.5

#### Criteria for Review for **Branch Campuses, Extension Campuses, Instructional Service Centers, Off-Campus Centers, and Off-Campus Sites.**

- **Justification of Need ~~Needs Assessment~~**– The proposal ~~must include~~ an explanation ~~requires supporting documentation~~ of the need for the new off-campus ~~center~~ location that justifies institutional allocation/reallocation of state resources. ~~The proposal must document the following:~~
  - ~~Community of industry support,~~
  - ~~A description of the target population; and~~
  - ~~How the proposed center contributes to the state's higher education completion agenda.~~
- **Enrollment** – The proposal must include anticipated enrollment in the location's initial year for short-term approvals and over the following four (4) academic years for long-term approvals.
- **Faculty and Staff** – The proposal must include anticipated faculty and staff support required to operate the new off-campus location.
- ~~**Sustainable Demand**— Proposal requires a projected headcount and full-time equivalent enrollment in the location's initial year and over the following four (4) academic years.~~
- **Operational Costs and Revenues** – Proposal ~~must include~~ ~~requires~~ supporting documentation detailing program costs and revenues associated with the proposed location. Projected costs include but are not limited to items such as leasing agreements, square footage and renovated space, equipment, utilities, instructional resources, faculty salaries, and all other items deemed necessary by the **Tennessee Higher Education** Commission. Revenues include but are not limited to items such as tuition and fees, state appropriations, and sales and services.
- **Facilities** – Facilities planned or in place for the off-campus location should be appropriate for the enrollment and character of programs offered. ~~In particular, facilities should meet the standards of SACSCOC, and other applicable accrediting and regulating agencies. Whenever the establishment or upgrading of a location requires substantially new facilities, which may or may not include a land purchase, the community should be willing to provide the site, access to all necessary utilities, highways, and access roads, and make a substantial contribution towards the initial planning and construction of the location. The leasing or acquisition of space or land is subject to approval by THEC and the State Building Commission; and must comply with current State laws set forth in Tennessee Code Annotated §§12-1-106, --107 or §§12-2-114, --115, State Building Commission policy, and THEC policy numbers F4.1 -- Master Plans and F4.2 -- Lease Space Funding and License Agreements.~~
- **Administration** – For off-campus locations that require an administrative presence, an explanation of the plans for administration of the off-campus location ~~must be provided and~~ should be appropriate for the enrollment and character of the academic programming offered.
- **Existing Off-Campus Centers** – In the event an institution has an existing



off-campus center and another institution proposes an off-campus center at the same location, the two institutions are required to document any communications and agreements related to the proposed off-campus center request to the THEC staff. THEC staff will review the request and will render a recommendation for approval or denial. If approved, an off-campus center code will be provided for the institution with the proposed off-campus center.

#### 1.4.6

**Off-Campus Locations Outside of Tennessee.** Pursuant to T.C.A. §49-7-202(q)(3), if the new location will create or expand a physical presence out of state, the higher education institution shall, through its governing board, file with the Tennessee Higher Education Commission a notice of intent to initiate out-of-state instructional activity prior to the development of the proposal.

#### 1.4.7

**Letter of Notification for a Facilities Acquisition.** A Letter of Notification (LON) informing THEC of a proposal to establish a new off-campus ~~center~~ location is required ~~at least 90 days in advance of~~ prior to any facilities acquisition, including lease execution and/or presentation to the State Building Commission or State Architect. ~~In extenuating circumstances, the Executive Director maintains the discretion to review a LON within a shorter time period.~~

The LON must include signatures and approvals from the President of the institution and a system representative (where applicable). The establishment of off-campus ~~centers~~ locations must be consistent with and reference the most recently approved campus master plan and institutional mission profile approved by THEC. Upon review and approval by the Executive Director, the institution and system can move forward with the proposed off-campus ~~center~~ location request.

#### ~~1.4A.5A3~~

~~**Commission Action.** Proposed off-campus centers approved by institutional or governing boards and recommended by THEC staff will be presented to the Commission for action at the earliest possible scheduled meeting.~~

~~In keeping with SACSCOC principles and federal requirements for truth in advertising, students may not enroll in any new off-campus center nor may any off-campus center be advertised by any public institution prior to approval by the Commission to implement.~~

#### ~~1.4A.6A~~

#### ~~**Off-Campus Sites**~~

#### ~~1.4A.6A1~~

~~**Criteria for Review of Off-Campus Sites.** An off-campus site is a physical space that is used to offer course credit. Some examples of typical offerings at off-campus sites include dual enrollment or dual credit offerings; workforce development opportunities; and short-term, specific instructional needs. The Commission considers the following criteria in order to maximize state resources in evaluating the creation and operation of off-campus sites:~~

- ~~● **Need**—Proposal requires supporting documentation of need for the new off-campus site that justifies institutional allocation/reallocation of state resources.~~

- ~~**Demand**~~— Proposal requires projected headcount and full-time equivalent enrollment in the first semester and first year.
- ~~**Operational Costs and External Support**~~— Proposal supporting documentation detailing operational costs associated with the proposed location, as well as a short narrative around any expenses and resources, including any cost sharing agreements with business or school systems.

~~**1.4A.6A2**~~ ~~**Executive Director Review.**~~ The Commission delegates the authority for review and approval of off-campus sites to the Executive Director. The Executive Director maintains discretion to refer an off-campus site request to the Commission for approval.

**1.4.8** **Major Changes to Off-Campus Locations.** Institutions must notify THEC of any changes to the academic program offerings at an off-campus location ~~at least one semester~~ prior to the ~~implementation~~ of a change. Changes include:

- Adding ~~or terminating new~~ academic programs (~~see THEC Policy A1.5 — Academic Actions Notification~~)
- ~~Extending existing academic programs (see THEC Policy A1.2 — Extension of Existing Academic Programs); and,~~
- Changing the type of off-campus location for an approved off-campus location (e.g., from an off-campus site to an off-campus center)
- Inactivating, phasing-out, and closing of off-campus locations ~~and/or terminating academic programs (see THEC Policy A1.5 — Academic Actions Notification).~~
- 

**1.4.9** **Review of Off-Campus Locations.** THEC will monitor off-campus location enrollments ~~every three (3) years~~ to determine that enrollments are continuous. ~~and to identify any potentially low enrollment locations.~~ During this review, THEC will request all institutions operating off-campus locations to provide updates in the event of any major change in offerings (e.g., shifting the purpose of a center or site from training teachers to dual enrollment) or increases and/or decreases in enrollment of twenty-five percent or more. THEC reserves the right to request an institution submit a new request for an off-campus location code in the event of a major change in offerings.

~~**1.4A.7A2**~~ ~~**Phase-Out and Closing of Off-Campus Locations.**~~ THEC may recommend that an institution and/or governing board phase out and close off-campus locations that experience low enrollment over time. Institutions and/or governing boards will have an opportunity to provide a justification for the lack of enrollment and request that the location remain active until the next review period.

~~**1.4A.8A**~~ This policy will be reviewed every five (5) years unless changes in off-campus location requirements are warranted.

**Sources:** THEC Meetings: April 22, 1988; November 14, 2002; July 26, 2007; July 27, 2017, January 28, 2022, and May 15, 2025.

**Section Title:** ~~Academic Policies~~

**Policy Title:** ~~Off-Campus Instruction – Tennessee Colleges of Applied Technology~~

**Policy Number:** ~~A 1.4B~~

**Scope and Purpose.** Pursuant to T.C.A. §49-7-202(q)(3), the Tennessee Higher Education Commission (THEC) is to review and approve or disapprove all proposals for off-campus locations at public institutions, including the Tennessee Colleges of Applied Technology (TCATs). The Commission grants the authority for review and approval to the Executive Director. The Executive Director maintains the discretion to refer an off-campus location to the Commission for approval.

This policy fulfills the Commission's charge to develop policies and procedures for the purpose of reviewing and approving off-campus locations at the TCATs. This policy is specific to locations offering diploma credit. The policy will adhere to the Council on Occupational Education (COE) definitions as it relates to off-campus instruction. The COE is the accrediting body for the TCATs. In cases where a TCAT is considered a part of a Community College, as is the case with TCAT Chattanooga and Chattanooga State Community College, the joint institution will be considered under the Off-Campus Instruction – Community Colleges and Universities Policy (A 1.4A).

#### **1.4B.2A Definitions.**

**Diploma Credit** – is coursework for credit towards a diploma and is only applicable to off-campus locations.

**Instructional Service Center** is a temporary or permanent location that serves employers and the public for the delivery of programs or portions of programs to meet a critical or sustained need. An instructional service center must be a joint venture between the institution and an employer or another educational agency. The occupational program at an instructional service center must be under the direct control of the main campus and located within the geographic service area designated by the governing board of the institution. Appropriate student services must be available on-site, and the full range of services must be made accessible to participating students at the main campus.

**Extension Campus** is a subordinate location within a fifty-mile radius site of the main campus. Direct supervision and control are provided from the main campus, and the staff is limited primarily to instructors and support staff. All programs of an extension campus must meet the educational requirements of the main campus and comply with its operational policies".

**Branch Campus** is a subordinate location of the main campus, operating under the supervision of a full-time, on-site, local administrator who reports to the chief administrative officer at the main campus. The branch campus

must meet all educational requirements and comply with the operational policies of the main campus”.

**Off-Campus Site**—is a physical space that is generally used to offer credit enrollment. Some examples of typical offerings at off-campus sites include: dual enrollment or dual credit offerings; workforce development opportunities, and short-term, specific instructional needs.

**1.4B.3A1** — **Locations Subject to Approval.** Proposals for instructional service centers, extension campuses, branch campuses, and off-campus sites will be subject to review and approval under this policy. Proposal formats appropriate to the following requested actions are available on the THEC website:

- Establish an Off-Campus Instructional Service Center, Extension Campus, or Branch Campus.
- Establish an Off-Campus Site.

**1.4B.3A2** — **Criteria for Review of an Instructional Service Center, an Extension Campus, and a Branch Campus.** THEC considers the following criteria, to maximize state resources, in evaluating the establishment of an off-campus Instructional Service Center, Extension Campus or Branch Campus locations at TCATs:

- **Needs Assessment** — Proposal must include supporting documentation of need for the new off-campus location that justifies institutional allocation/reallocation of state resources.
- **Sustainable Demand** — Proposal must include supporting documentation of anticipated enrollment in the location’s initial year and over the following four (4) academic years.
- **Operational Costs and Revenues** — Proposal must include supporting documentation detailing program costs and revenues associated with the proposed location. Projected costs include but are not limited to items such as leasing agreements, square footage and renovated space, equipment, utilities, instructional resources, faculty salaries, and all other items deemed necessary by the Commission. Revenues include but are not limited to items such as tuition and fees, state appropriations, and sales and services.
- **Facilities** — Facilities planned or in place for the off-campus location should be appropriate for the enrollment and character of programs offered. In particular, facilities should meet the standards of COE, and other applicable accrediting and regulating agencies. Whenever the establishment or upgrading of a location requires substantially new facilities, which may or may not include a land purchase, the community should be willing to provide the

site, the access to all necessary utilities, highways, and access roads, and make a substantial contribution towards the initial planning and construction of the location. The leasing or acquisition of space or land is subject to approval by THEC and the State Building Commission and must comply with current state laws set forth in T.C.A. §§12-1-106, 107 or 12-2-114-115, State Building Commission policy, and THEC policy numbers F4.1- Master Plans and F4.2- Lease Space Funding and License Agreements.

**1.4B.3A3** **Criteria for Review of Off-Campus Sites.** An off-campus site is a physical space that is generally used to offer credit enrollment. Some examples of typical offerings at off-campus sites include: dual enrollment or dual credit offerings, workforce development opportunities; and short-term, specific instructional needs. The Commission considers the following criteria to maximize state resources in evaluating the creation and operation of off-campus sites:

- **Need**—Proposal requires supporting documentation of need for the new off-campus site that justifies institutional allocation/reallocation of state resources.
- **Demand**—Proposal requires supporting documentation of anticipated enrollment at the location.
- **Operational Costs and External Support**—Proposal requires supporting documentation detailing program costs associated with the proposed location, as well as a short narrative around any shared expenses and resources.

**1.4B.4A1** **Review of Off-Campus Locations.** THEC will monitor off-campus location enrollments every three (3) years to determine that enrollments are continuous and identify any potentially low-enrollment locations.

**1.4B.4A2** **Phase Out and Closing of Off-Campus Locations.** THEC may recommend to the Tennessee Board of Regents (TBR) the phase out and closure of off-campus locations that experience low enrollment over time. TBR and TCATs will have an opportunity to provide a justification for the lack of enrollment and request that the location remain active until the next review period. TBR and TCATs should notify THEC of off-campus locations requiring inactivation every three (3) years.

**1.4B.5A1** **No Unnecessary Duplication.** THEC will not approve the establishment of an off-campus location or site if the proposed delivery of instructional services could reasonably occur through existing TCATs or other off-campus locations.

~~1.4B.5A2~~ **Service Area.** If a proposed off-campus location is in the service area of another institution, it is expected that TCATs will communicate with relevant institutions to coordinate off-campus offerings. TBR will resolve any service area conflicts between TCATs and community colleges prior to submission of the off-campus location request to the Commission.

~~1.4B.6A~~ This policy will be reviewed every five (5) years unless changes in off-campus location requirements are warranted.

**Sources:** THEC Meetings: July 27, 2017 and January 28, 2022.

## ATTACHMENT B: Clean Policy Revision

**Section Title:** Academic Policies  
**Policy Title:** Off-Campus Instruction  
**Policy Number:** A 1.4

**1.4.1** **Scope and Purpose.** Pursuant to T.C.A. §49-7-202(q)(3), the Tennessee Higher Education Commission (THEC) is to review and approve or disapprove all proposals for off-campus locations at all public institutions including universities, community colleges, and colleges of applied technology.

The Commission delegates the authority for review and approval of off-campus locations to the Executive Director. The Executive Director maintains the discretion to refer an off-campus location to the Commission for approval. Students may not enroll in any new off-campus location, nor may any off-campus location be advertised by any public institution prior to THEC approval.

**1.4.2** **Locations Subject to Approval.**

**Branch Campus:** A branch campus is a location affiliated with a college of applied technology and is operated under the supervision of a full-time, on-site, local administrator who reports to the chief administrative officer at the main campus.

**Extension Campus:** An extension campus is a location affiliated with a college of applied technology within a fifty-mile radius of the main campus. Direct supervision and control are provided from the main campus, and the staff is limited primarily to instructors and support staff.

**Instructional Service Center:** An instructional service center is a location affiliated with a college of applied technology that serves employers and the public for the delivery of programs or portions of programs to meet a workforce need. An instructional service center must be a joint venture between the institution and an employer or another educational agency and must be located within the geographic service area designated by the governing board of the institution. Appropriate student services must be available on-site, and the full range of services must be made accessible to participating students at the main campus.

**Off-Campus Center:** An off-campus center is a location affiliated with a public community college or university that is geographically apart from the main campus where students can enroll and complete at least one academic program. There must be a continuing administrative presence, evidenced by at least one full-time or part-time administrator housed on-site.

**Off-Campus Site:** An off-campus site is a physical space affiliated with a university, community college, or college of applied technology that is used to offer credit enrollment geographically apart from the main campus. Some examples of typical offerings at off-campus sites include dual enrollment or dual credit offerings; workforce development opportunities; and short-term, specific instructional needs.

#### 1.4.3

**No Unnecessary Duplication.** THEC will not approve the establishment of an off-campus location if the proposed delivery of instructional services could reasonably occur through existing institutions or other off-campus locations. It is expected that institutions and/or systems will resolve any conflicts between the institutions impacted by the proposed off-campus location submission prior to submission of the off-campus location request to THEC.

An institution contemplating the creation of an off-campus location must review the THEC off-campus inventory to avoid duplication. The institution must communicate its proposal to the impacted institution(s) in writing prior to the submission of the proposal to THEC. Impacted institutions will have 10 business days to review and provide feedback to the requesting institution. Requesting institutions shall document any communications and agreements with impacted institutions in the off-campus request to THEC. Impacted institutions should also submit any unresolved objections to the proposed off-campus location to the THEC Executive Director.

#### 1.4.4

**Exclusions to the Off-Campus Instruction Policy.** The following offerings and/or locations are excluded from this off-campus location policy:

- Clinical training sites with no didactic instruction
- Continuing education coursework
- Non-credit coursework, including non-degree apprenticeship
- Online offerings, unless the student is required to be at the location (synchronously or asynchronously) to receive instruction
- Study abroad coursework
- Student teaching locations and degree apprenticeship locations with no instruction on-site

#### 1.4.5

**Criteria for Review for Branch Campuses, Extension Campuses, Instructional Service Centers, Off-Campus Centers, and Off-Campus Sites**

- **Justification of Need** – The proposal must include an explanation of the need for the new off-campus location that justifies institutional allocation/reallocation of state resources.
- **Enrollment** – The proposal must include anticipated enrollment in the location's initial year for short-term approvals and over the following four (4) academic years for long-term approvals.
- **Faculty and Staff** – The proposal must include anticipated faculty and staff support required to operate the new off-campus location.
- **Operational Costs and Revenues** – Proposal must include supporting documentation detailing program costs and revenues associated with the proposed location. Projected costs include but are not limited to items such as leasing agreements, square footage and renovated space, equipment, utilities, instructional resources, faculty salaries, and all other items deemed necessary by the Tennessee Higher Education Commission. Revenues include but are not limited to items such as tuition and fees, state appropriations, and sales and services.



- **Facilities** – Facilities planned or in place for the off-campus location should be appropriate for the enrollment and character of programs offered.
- **Administration** – For off-campus locations that require an administrative presence, an explanation of the plans for administration of the off-campus location must be provided and should be appropriate for the enrollment and character of the academic programming offered.

**1.4.6 Off-Campus Locations Outside of Tennessee.** If the new location will create or expand a physical presence out of state, the higher education institution shall, through its governing board, file with the Tennessee Higher Education Commission a notice of intent to initiate out-of-state instructional activity prior to the development of the proposal.

**1.4.7 Letter of Notification for a Facilities Acquisition.** A Letter of Notification (LON) informing THEC of a proposal to establish a new off-campus location is required prior to any facilities acquisition, including lease execution and/or presentation to the State Building Commission or State Architect.

The LON must include signatures and approvals from the President of the institution and a system representative (where applicable). The establishment of off-campus locations must be consistent with and reference the most recently approved campus master plan and institutional mission profile approved by THEC. Upon review and approval by the Executive Director, the institution and system can move forward with the proposed off-campus location request.

**1.4.8 Changes to Off-Campus Locations.** Institutions must notify THEC of any changes to the academic program offerings at an off-campus location prior to the implementation of a change. Changes include:

- Adding or terminating academic programs
- Changing the type of off-campus location for an approved off-campus location (e.g., from an off-campus site to an off-campus center)
- Inactivating, phasing-out, and closing of off-campus locations

**1.4.9 Review of Off-Campus Locations.** THEC will monitor off-campus location enrollments to determine that enrollments are continuous.

**Sources:** THEC Meetings: April 22, 1988; November 14, 2002; July 26, 2007; July 27, 2017, January 28, 2022, and May 15, 2025.



# TENNESSEE HIGHER EDUCATION COMMISSION

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**REGULAR CALENDAR ITEM: IV.**

**MEETING DATE:** May 15, 2025

**SUBJECT:** Financial Policy Revision: Financial Policy F1.0: Capital Projects

**ITEM TYPE:** Action

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## BACKGROUND

Public Chapter 186 of the 114<sup>th</sup> General Assembly modifies THEC's responsibility with regards to capital outlay projects. Section 6 of this legislation was crafted to support the state's interest in the development and identification of projects that best align with state goals for higher education. Capital outlay projects will be categorized according to enumerated project types, and the state will then have the flexibility to recommend projects that best align with each year's appropriation goals.

This policy revision removes references to both priority and rank. In addition, the project categories from statute are memorialized in policy. THEC's capital outlay instructions for the institutions will continue to support development of capital projects that are consistent with state goals, the institutions' respective missions and master plans, and detailed advanced planning suitable for the projects' potential funding and subsequent State Building Commission approval.

## PUBLIC CHAPTER 186

Tennessee Code Annotated, Section 49-7-202(o), now reads as follows:

- (o) The commission shall establish a formal process, consistent with §49-7-1002, for identifying capital investment needs for consideration by the governor and the general assembly as part of the annual appropriations act. The commission shall, as part of the process established pursuant to this subsection (o):
  - (1) Annually submit a list of capital projects that meet the necessary requirements for funding consideration, as established by the commission; and
  - (2) Categorize capital projects, as applicable, as follows:
    - (A) Workforce development needs and goals;
    - (B) Institutional research needs and goals;
    - (C) Institutional priorities for consideration due to time sensitivity or other extenuating circumstances; or
    - (D) Facility renovation or optimization needs.

Attachment A: Redline Version

**Section Title:** Financial Policies

**Policy Title:** Capital Projects

**Policy Number:** F4.0

4.0.10 **Scope and Purpose.** As the coordinating body for higher education in Tennessee, the Commission engages with institutions and governing boards on capital investment and real estate transactions through its role to develop and approve recommendations for capital outlay and maintenance funding.

4.0.20 **Authority.** The Commission is empowered to identify, ~~prioritize,~~ and make recommendations and decisions upon capital investment and real estate transactions for institutions of higher education in its execution of the Master Plan, approval of institutional master plans, and oversight of the state's comprehensive strategic financial plan for higher education.

4.0.30A **Procedures.** The Commission shall annually identify capital investment needs meeting the necessary requisites for funding consideration and determine priorities for those investments for consideration by the Governor and the General Assembly as part of the annual appropriations act.

4.0.30B The Commission shall consider capital and infrastructure issues, as well as higher education efficiency, performance, and return on investment, as part of its comprehensive strategic financial plan for higher education.

4.0.30C The Commission reserves the right to not ~~listrank~~ or approve projects for capital outlay or maintenance funding that are not identified in an institution's current and approved facility master plan.

4.0.30D The Commission authorizes the Executive Director to make adjustments to the capital outlay and capital maintenance recommendations as necessary on behalf of the Commission.

4.0.40A **Capital Outlay.** In accordance with funding request guidelines

annually disseminated by Commission staff, the Commission shall receive a prioritized list of capital outlay projects from each governing board.

4.0.40B Commission staff shall make a recommendation to the Commission consisting of one ~~prioritized~~ list of projects, classified in the following categories:-

- (A) Workforce development needs and goals;
- (B) Institutional research needs and goals;
- (C) Institutional priorities for consideration due to time sensitivity or other extenuating circumstances; or
- (D) Facility renovation or optimization needs.

When reviewing projects, Commission staff may employ the assistance of external reviewers and may consider, but shall not be limited to:

- 1) State goals;
- 2) Campus master and strategic plans;
- 3) THEC Space Guidelines and facility assessments;
- 4) Program ~~and business~~ plans; and
- 5) External funding.

Commission staff may consider these factors differently by sector, project scope, or institutional type and mission.

4.0.40C The Commission shall review and approve a recommendation for the funding of capital outlay projects. The Commission's actions and a categorized ~~prioritized~~ list of capital projects shall be transmitted to the Department of Finance and Administration for review and consideration in the annual appropriation request.

~~4.0.40D — The Commission reserves the right to list, not list, alter a recommended listing, or rank, not rank, alter a recommended ranking, or take any other action(s) it deems fit to advance state goals.~~

4.0.50A **Capital Maintenance.** In accordance with funding request guidelines annually disseminated by Commission staff, the Commission shall receive a prioritized list of capital maintenance projects from each governing board.

- 4.0.50B Commission staff shall make project recommendations to the Commission in accordance with a capital maintenance formula. The formula may include, but not be limited to, the age, gross Education & General (E&G) square footage, usage, and conditions of institutions' facilities.
- 4.0.50C The Commission shall review and approve a recommendation for the funding of capital maintenance projects. The Commission's actions shall be transmitted to the Department of Finance and Administration for review and consideration in the annual appropriation request.
- 4.0.60A **Disclosed Projects.** Institutions may choose to construct, demolish, maintain, renovate, or otherwise engage with capital projects funded in part by the Tennessee State School Bond Authority (TSSBA) or sources other than state appropriations.
- 4.0.60B The Commission authorizes the Executive Director to receive, compile, and report a list of disclosed capital projects from School Bonds and other Sources that are listed in the Capital Outlay and Facilities Program in the Appropriations Act. These projects shall be disclosed in accordance with T.C.A § 4-15-102(e).

**Approved:** April 22, 1988  
**Revised:** January 27, 1989  
July 26, 1996  
July 25, 1997  
April 18, 2002  
April 17, 2003  
November 17, 2005  
November 20, 2008  
May 11, 2017  
August 17, 2023  
May 15, 2025

#### **Applicable Statute**

T.C.A. § 4-15-102, state building commission  
T.C.A. § 4-15-107, state building commission  
T.C.A. § 49-7-132, state building commission  
T.C.A. § 49-7-202, capital investment needs  
T.C.A. § 49-7-1002, higher education funding requests  
T.C.A. § 49-8-203, capital and real estate transactions

T.C.A. § 49-7-202(o), higher education

**Section Title:** [Financial Policies](#)

**Policy Title:** Capital Projects

**Policy Number:** F4.0

- 4.0.10      **Scope and Purpose.** As the coordinating body for higher education in Tennessee, the Commission engages with institutions and governing boards on capital investment and real estate transactions through its role to develop and approve recommendations for capital outlay and maintenance funding.
- 4.0.20      **Authority.** The Commission is empowered to identify, and make recommendations and decisions upon capital investment and real estate transactions for institutions of higher education in its execution of the Master Plan, approval of institutional master plans, and oversight of the state’s comprehensive strategic financial plan for higher education.
- 4.0.30A     **Procedures.** The Commission shall annually identify capital investment needs meeting the necessary requisites for funding consideration by the Governor and the General Assembly as part of the annual appropriations act.
- 4.0.30B     The Commission shall consider capital and infrastructure issues, as well as higher education efficiency, performance, and return on investment, as part of its comprehensive strategic financial plan for higher education.
- 4.0.30C     The Commission reserves the right to not list or approve projects for capital outlay or maintenance funding that are not identified in an institution’s current and approved facility master plan.
- 4.0.30D     The Commission authorizes the Executive Director to make adjustments to the capital outlay and capital maintenance recommendations as necessary on behalf of the Commission.
- 4.0.40A     **Capital Outlay.** In accordance with funding request guidelines annually disseminated by Commission staff, the Commission shall receive a prioritized list of capital outlay projects from

each governing board.

4.0.40B Commission staff shall make a recommendation to the Commission consisting of one list of projects, classified in the following categories:

- (A) Workforce development needs and goals;
- (B) Institutional research needs and goals;
- (C) Institutional priorities for consideration due to time sensitivity or other extenuating circumstances; or
- (D) Facility renovation or optimization needs.

When reviewing projects, Commission staff may employ the assistance of external reviewers and may consider, but shall not be limited to:

- 1) State goals;
- 2) Campus master and strategic plans;
- 3) THEC Space Guidelines and facility assessments;
- 4) Program plans; and
- 5) External funding.

4.0.40C The Commission shall review and approve a recommendation for the funding of capital outlay projects. The Commission's actions and a categorized list of capital projects shall be transmitted to the Department of Finance and Administration for review and consideration in the annual appropriation request.

4.0.50A **Capital Maintenance.** In accordance with funding request guidelines annually disseminated by Commission staff, the Commission shall receive a prioritized list of capital maintenance projects from each governing board.

4.0.50B Commission staff shall make project recommendations to the Commission in accordance with a capital maintenance formula. The formula may include, but not be limited to, the age, gross Education & General (E&G) square footage, usage, and conditions of institutions' facilities.

4.0.50C The Commission shall review and approve a recommendation for the funding of capital maintenance projects. The Commission's actions shall be transmitted to the Department of Finance and



Administration for review and consideration in the annual appropriation request.

- 4.0.60A     **Disclosed Projects.** Institutions may choose to construct, demolish, maintain, renovate, or otherwise engage with capital projects funded in part by the Tennessee State School Bond Authority (TSSBA) or sources other than state appropriations.
- 4.0.60B     The Commission authorizes the Executive Director to receive, compile, and report a list of disclosed capital projects from School Bonds and other Sources that are listed in the Capital Outlay and Facilities Program in the Appropriations Act. These projects shall be disclosed in accordance with T.C.A § 4-15-102(e).

**Approved:**     April 22, 1988  
**Revised:**     January 27, 1989  
                     July 26, 1996  
                     July 25, 1997  
                     April 18, 2002  
                     April 17, 2003  
                     November 17, 2005  
                     November 20, 2008  
                     May 11, 2017  
                     August 17, 2023  
                     May 15, 2025

**Applicable Statute**

T.C.A. § 4-15-102, state building commission  
T.C.A. § 4-15-107, state building commission  
T.C.A. § 49-7-132, state building commission  
T.C.A. § 49-7-202, capital investment needs  
T.C.A. § 49-7-1002, higher education funding requests  
T.C.A. § 49-8-203, capital and real estate transactions  
T.C.A. § 49-7-202(o), higher education



# TENNESSEE HIGHER EDUCATION COMMISSION

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**REGULAR CALENDAR ITEM: V.**

**MEETING DATE:** May 15, 2025

**SUBJECT:** Tennessee Student Assistance Corporation Overview

**ITEM TYPE:** Information

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## BACKGROUND

Public Chapter 234 of the 114<sup>th</sup> General Assembly merges the Tennessee Student Assistance Corporation into THEC and names this Commission as the Board of Directors for TSAC. Chief Aid and Compliance Officer Peter Abernathy will provide an overview of the Tennessee Student Assistance Corporation and the duties of the Board of Directors.



# TENNESSEE HIGHER EDUCATION COMMISSION

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**REGULAR CALENDAR ITEM: VI.**

**MEETING DATE:** May 15, 2025

**SUBJECT:** Tennessee State University Update

**ITEM TYPE:** Information

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## **BACKGROUND**

President Dwayne Tucker will provide an update for Tennessee State University.