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Tennessee Higher Education Commission Announces Appointment of Dr. Robert Smith to Commission

NASHVILLE, TN – November 26, 2024 – The Tennessee Higher Education Commission (THEC) is pleased to announce the appointment of Dr. Robert M. Smith to the Commission. Officially appointed by Governor Bill Lee in early November, Dr. Smith brings a wealth of experience in higher education, public policy, and leadership to his new role.

Dr. Smith is a highly respected higher education leader who is president emeritus of Slippery Rock University in Pennsylvania and chancellor emeritus of University of Tennessee at Martin. He previously served as the Interim Executive Director of THEC, stepping in during a critical period to ensure continued success and stability for the agency.

"Dr. Smith's leadership and vision will be invaluable as we continue to support Tennessee's colleges and universities," said Dr. Steven Gentile, Executive Director of the Tennessee Higher Education Commission. "His deep understanding of our state's higher education system, combined with his commitment to improving educational opportunities for all Tennesseans, will be critical as we work to meet the challenges and opportunities facing our institutions."

As a member of the Commission, Dr. Smith will play a pivotal role in advising on critical policy decisions and initiatives that support students, Tennesseans, and the Tennessee higher education system.

Dr. Smith attended his first THEC commission meeting in his new role on November 7, 2024.

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The Tennessee Higher Education Commission was created in 1967 by the Tennessee General Assembly. The Commission develops, implements, evaluates postsecondary education policies and programs in Tennessee while coordinating the state's systems of higher education, and is relentlessly focused on increasing the number of Tennesseans with a postsecondary credential.