

TENNESSEE HIGHER EDUCATION COMMISSION

Minutes of the Winter Quarterly Commission Meeting

Nashville Room, 3rd Floor

Tennessee Tower

312 Rosa L. Parks Ave.

Nashville, TN 37243

January 25, 2024

Link to recording: [THEC Winter 2024 Commission Meeting 1/25/2024 \(tn.gov\)](https://www.tn.gov/newsroom/2024/01/25/2024-01-25-thec-winter-2024-commission-meeting-1-25-2024)

Chairwoman Scarlett called the meeting to order at 9:02 a.m. CST.

Member	PRESENT	ABSENT
Chairwoman Tara Scarlett	X	
Commissioner Whitney Allmon		X
Commissioner Evan Cope	X	
Commissioner Jacob Knight	X	
Commissioner Pam Koban	X	
Commissioner Jimmy Matlock	X	
Commissioner Jay Moser		X
Commissioner Vernon Stafford, Jr.	X	
Commissioner AC Wharton		X
Commissioner Dakasha Winton	X	
Secretary Tre Hargett	X	
Treasurer David H. Lillard, Jr.	X	
Nathan James, Commissioner Sara Morrison Designee	X	
Comptroller Jason Mumpower	X	

At the start of the meeting there were seven (7) voting members physically present, constituting a quorum. Secretary Hargett, Treasurer Lillard, and Comptroller Mumpower entered the meeting at 9:11 a.m. Comptroller Mumpower left the meeting at 9:55 a.m.

Adoption of Agenda

Commissioner Stafford made a motion to adopt the agenda. Commissioner Knight seconded the motion. A voice vote was taken, and the motion passed unanimously.

Public Comments

There were no public comments.

Approval of Minutes: November 16, 2023, Fall Quarterly Meeting

Commissioner Knight made a motion to approve the November 16, 2023, Fall Quarterly Meeting Minutes. Commissioner Koban seconded the motion. A voice vote was taken, and the motion passed unanimously.

Chair's Report

Chairwoman Scarlett discussed the inflection point of higher education and the implications for workforce development. Chairwoman Scarlett provided suggestions on how the Commission can support higher education going to the next level, including pilot programs for K-12 education, Teach for America, and other programs that reimagine how higher education can be relevant and competitive in addressing workforce needs by partnering with industry professionals.

Executive Director's Report

Dr. Steven Gentile, Executive Director, provided an overview of the Commission's agenda along with an overview of his first 30 days as Executive Director. This overview included meetings with each THEC bureau and efforts to maintain and create a pattern of constant communication with all stakeholders.

Consent Calendar

Chairwoman Scarlett stated that with no objection, the Commission would vote on the consent items as a set. Comptroller Mumpower made a motion to approve the Consent Calendar items. Secretary Hargett seconded the motion. A voice vote was taken, and the motion passed unanimously.

Regular Calendar

I. Academic Policies (*Action Item*)

Chairwoman Scarlett stated that with no objection, the Commission would vote on the Academic Policies as a set. Commissioner Winton provided an overview of the Academics, Access, and Student Success Committee Meeting.

Comptroller Mumpower made a motion to approve the revised academic policies, A1.0 New Academic Programs, Approval Process and A1.6 Expedited Academic Programs: Approval Process. Commissioner Winton seconded the motion. A voice vote was taken, and the motion passed unanimously.

II. Rule Repeal: 1540-01-03 Regulations for Apportioning Funds Under the Agriculture and Home Economic Endowment Trust Fund (*Action Item*)

Treasurer Lillard provided an overview of the rule repeal and the Finance and Operations Committee's recommendation to approve the rule repeal as a housekeeping item.

Treasurer Lillard made a motion to approve the rule repeal. Comptroller Mumpower seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion passed with ten (10) ayes.

III. Institution Report (*Information Only*)

Dr. Phil Oldham, President of Tennessee Technological University, provided his institutional report. He included three (3) student focused areas: relevance, value, and response.

Commission members asked questions, and a discussion was held.

IV. Council of State Governments Presentation (*Information Only*)

Mr. Cody Allen, Senior Policy Analyst with The Council of State Governments Southern Office, provided an overview of the southern region of the United States higher education system, where Tennessee is a leader. Mr. Allen stated that institutions are focused on new and expanding funding

streams, addressing common admission problems, artificial intelligence frameworks, non-tuition enrollment factors, increasing dual enrollment, and aligning higher education with workforce needs.

Commission members asked questions, and a discussion was held.

V. Food Insecurity Report (*Information Only*)

Dr. Jacob Kamer, Data Strategist, provided information on what constitutes food insecurity; food deserts in Tennessee in relation to main higher education campuses; and how institutions are currently addressing food insecurity among students. Dr. Kamer noted that all institutions were doing something to address food insecurity, but they were all doing something different. Dr. Kamer focused on additional resources such as improving communication between federal and state resources, dedicated resources on campus to support basic needs, and the exploration of the adoption of the Hunger Free Campus Act.

Commission members asked questions, and a discussion was held.

VI. Reconnect Re-Entry Program (*Information Only*)

Ms. Jessica Gibson, Senior Director of Adult Learners Initiatives, gave an overview of Navigate Reconnect and Governor Lee's Correctional Education Initiative which is currently in nine (9) prisons serving 2,787 justice-involved individuals.

Commission members asked questions, and a discussion was held.

Ms. Miranda Miller, Reconnect Re-Entry Director, gave an overview of her firsthand experience as a Re-Entry Director and the rewards and challenges of working with justice-involved individuals that are currently housed with the Tennessee Department of Corrections.

Commission members asked questions, and a discussion was held.

Mr. Robert Gledhill, Re-Entry Navigator, provided an overview of his firsthand experience as a Re-Entry Navigator, with an emphasis on the work being more proactive than reactive like the justice system. Mr. Gledhill provided a story of a reconstructor who recently graduated.

Commission members asked questions, and a discussion was held.

Mr. Jeremy White, from the Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Office of Re-Entry, gave his firsthand experience as being a recipient of the Re-Entry Program as a justice-involved individual and how he is able to work and help others achieve their goals after leaving the correctional setting.

Commission members asked questions, and a discussion was held.

VII. Other Business

Mr. Nathan James congratulated Dr. Gentile on his appointment as Executive Director.

Chairwoman Scarlett adjourned the meeting at 11:14 a.m. CST.

NEXT THEC COMMISSION MEETING:

Thursday, May 16, 2024, in Nashville

THEC Chairwoman Tara Scarlett

THEC Secretary Whitney Allmon