

TENNESSEE HIGHER EDUCATION COMMISSION

Minutes of the Spring Quarterly Commission Meeting

Nashville Room, 3rd Floor

Tennessee Tower

312 Rosa L. Parks Ave.

Nashville, TN 37243

May 16, 2024

Link to recording: [THEC Spring Commission Meeting 5/16/2024 \(tn.gov\)](https://www.tn.gov/newsroom/2024/05/16/2024-05-16-thec-spring-commission-meeting-5-16-2024-tn.gov)

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

Member	PRESENT	ABSENT
Chairwoman Tara Scarlett	X	
Commissioner Whitney Allmon	X	
Commissioner Evan Cope	X	
Commissioner Pam Koban	X	
Commissioner Jimmy Matlock	X	
Commissioner Jay Moser		X
Commissioner Vernon Stafford, Jr.		X
Commissioner AC Wharton	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 seven (7) voting members physically present and two (2) voting member participating electronically, constituting a quorum.

Adoption of Agenda

Chairwoman Scarlett asked the Commission to consider amending the agenda to allow for the Chair and Executive Director's report to be addressed after all action items have been heard. Secretary Hargett made a motion to adopt the amended agenda. Commissioner Matlock seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion passed unanimously.

Public Comments

There were no public comments.

Approval of Minutes: January 25, 2024, Winter Quarterly Meeting

Commissioner Koban made a motion to approve the January 25, 2024, Winter Quarterly Meeting Minutes. Comptroller Mumpower seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion passed unanimously.

Consent Calendar

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

Regular Calendar I

I. 2024-25 Binding Tuition and Fee Ranges (*Action Item*)

Treasurer Lillard, Chair of the Finance and Operations Committee, gave an overview of the Finance and Operations Committee's decision to adopt a recommended guiding range of 0 to 5.5%. Ms. Amanda Klafehn, Chief Strategy Officer, provided background information pertaining to state appropriations approving \$17 million and a 3% salary increase for higher education employees. Additional information was provided pertaining to the new rules for the Federal Fair Labor Standards Act that go into effect July 1, 2024, and January 1, 2025. These new rules will affect 3,200 employees requiring campuses to increase salaries to a new minimum or provide overtime pay to employees whose pay is under the threshold. Dr. Steven Gentile, Executive Director, provided additional comments regarding interactions with institutions and that whether the implementation of the new regulations will be delayed by the federal government is unknown. Lastly, Dr. Gentile spoke about a letter received by the Tennessee Board of Regents, which voiced concerns with the tuition model and keeping the revenue per student ratio at the same level.

Treasurer Lillard commented that the Committee did not take lightly the recommended change from 0-4% to 0 to 5.5% but wanted to give institutions flexibility while cautioning them to be as economical as possible.

Treasurer Lillard made a motion to approve the revised recommended 2024-25 Binding Tuition and Fee Range to 0 to 5.5%. Commission members asked questions, and a discussion was held. Comptroller Mumpower seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion passed with eight (8) ayes and one (1) nay from Commissioner Matlock.

II. New Academic Programs (*Action Item*)

Chairwoman Scarlett stated that without objection, the Commission would vote on the eight (8) new academic programs as a set. Dr. Julie Roberts, Chief Academic Officer, provided an overview of the Access, Academics, and Student Success Committee's recommendation to approve the eight (8) new academic programs, which included five (5) Baccalaureate degree programs, two (2) Master's degree programs, and one (1) Doctoral degree program.

Commission members asked questions, and a discussion was held.

Secretary Hargett made a motion to approve all programs. Commissioner Matlock seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion passed unanimously.

III. Access, Academics, and Student Success Committee (*Action Item*)

Chairwoman Scarlett proposed that Commissioner Allmon be added to the Access, Academics, and Student Success Committee.

Commissioner Wharton made a motion to appoint Commissioner Allmon to the Access, Academics, and Student Success Committee. Treasurer Lillard seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion passed unanimously.

Chair's Report

Chairwoman Scarlett's report highlighted her appreciation for THEC's program approval process being condensed, the Capital Task Force review being a more streamlined approach, and the ten (10) year anniversary of Tennessee Promise.

Executive Director's Report

Dr. Gentile recognized various individuals in the audience and thanked both Jacob Knight and Dakasha Winton for their service on the Commission. Dr. Gentile updated the Commission on the passing of a staff member, Marcie Mills, over the weekend. Dr. Gentile spoke on the guiding vision of cultivating cohesiveness in the higher education enterprise by strengthening relationships with key stakeholders. Lastly, Dr. Gentile spoke about internal staffing changes.

Commissioner Allmon spoke regarding her experience visiting the Northwest Correctional Complex and how our work constructively impacts those in the correctional system.

Commission members asked questions, and a discussion was held.

IV. System Report (*Information Only*)

Dr. Brian Noland, President of East Tennessee State University (ETSU), provided an institution report for ETSU. Dr. Noland spoke on the four principles of the University's mission: regional service, scholarship, study of education as a science, and knowledge of the conditions and needs of the state. Dr. Noland elaborated on the discussion regarding the Federal Fair Labor Standards Act which would impact over a hundred ETSU employees on July 1, 2024, and more than five hundred employees on January 1, 2025.

Commission members asked questions, and discussion as held.

V. Executive Committee Update (*Information Only*)

Chairwoman Scarlett gave an overview of the Executive Committee meeting and discussed officer terms and term limits. The Committee's recommendation was for officers to serve two years with the ability to serve a second term, then a mandatory one (1) term minimum break from serving as an officer. Additionally, Chairwoman Scarlett discussed the two (2) ad hoc committees becoming permanent.

VI. Legislative Update (*Information Only*)

Lou Hanemann, Chief of External Affairs, gave an overview of the legislative session. This session included THEC receiving a \$67.5 million rural health pathway grant and \$15 million dollars in additional grants. Additionally, Western Governor's University is now eligible for the Tennessee Future Teacher Scholarship, the funding formulas were approved, and the University of Tennessee Chattanooga and University of Tennessee Health Science Center's capital outlay projects were approved.

Commission members asked questions, and a discussion was held.

VII. Other Business

There was no other business.

Chairwoman Scarlett adjourned the meeting at 11:10 a.m. CDT.

NEXT THEC COMMISSION MEETING:

Thursday, August 15, 2024, in Nashville

THEC Chairwoman Tara Scarlett

THEC Secretary Whitney Allmon