MEMORANDUM

TO: University and College Presidents
   President Joe DiPietro
   Chancellor John Morgan

FROM: Richard G. Rhoda

SUBJECT: Tennessee Performance Funding 2010-2015 Program: Quality Assurance

DATE: September 1, 2011

The Tennessee Performance Funding Program standards (2010-2015) have been constructed to serve as the quality assurance companion to the new outcomes-based funding formula. Performance Funding as an accountability process has served the state well for almost thirty years, and the standards of the new cycle should continue this legacy.

Please find attached a summary of THEC-scheduled workshops, evaluator training sessions, and data support provisions that will engage campus personnel associated with Performance Funding. These resources are designed to assist institutions in carrying out the quality assurance and student completion objectives of the State’s 2010-15 Public Agenda for Higher Education. These support functions serve the same purposes as the recent Funding Formula technical assistance and information dissemination meetings conducted by THEC staff.

Please contact Betty Dandridge Johnson (betty.dandridge.johnson@tn.gov) with questions or comments about the attached Performance Funding update.

cc: Dr. Paula Myrick Short, TBR
    Dr. Katherine High, UT
    Dr. Linda Doran, THEC
    2010-15 Performance Funding Taskforce
Performance Funding 2010-15 Cycle: Overview

Subsequent to the approval of the new standards for the 2010-15 Performance Funding Cycle, the THEC staff has been actively engaged in providing assistance to the campuses and governing boards. During September 2010, THEC staff offered three training sessions for the performance funding coordinators. These sessions focused primarily on the major changes of the new cycle. Additionally, due to staff changes at six institutions, THEC staff has been very involved with these institutions to ensure program continuity in implementing the 2010-11 performance funding activities.

THEC also updated its website:
http://www.state.tn.us/thec/Divisions/AcademicAffairs/aa_main.html

The Performance Funding website focuses on the new cycle as well as information on all previous cycles, resources and research studies conducted by the THEC staff.

General Education Assessment

In April 2010, THEC requested that institutions select their general education test for the 2010-15 Performance Funding Cycle. Institutions were reminded to select this test very carefully since the option to switch tests during the mid-cycle would no longer be available.

The scoring of the General Education standard was modified to include an institutional improvement component that would be used in the final two years of the cycle. This institutional improvement calculation is based on a 3-year rolling average and therefore the same assessment was required.

By August 2010, institutions had selected their general education assessment with the majority of institutions using the same test from the previous cycle.

Academic Programs

Accreditation, Program Evaluation and Major Field Assessment

The Accreditation and Program Evaluation standard ensures that all academic programs are either accredited or evaluated based on a set of objective standards. Institutions have the flexibility to use either the traditional program review or Academic Audit to evaluate non-accreditable programs.
THEC staff provided institutions with a reporting template to schedule program evaluations and major field assessments. Per the Performance Funding guidelines, institutions have the option to review programs on a five to seven-year period depending on their institutional effectiveness plans.

For accreditable programs, institutions submitted documentation (reaffirmation letters) to support program accreditation. Accreditable programs that have not achieved accreditation were required to submit a timeline to ensure program accreditation by the end of the 2010-15 cycle.

Institutions also submitted their 5-year testing calendar for the major field assessment standard. As in the previous cycle, all licensure programs are reported annually. If programs were scheduled to use a new locally developed assessment during the cycle, plans for test construction had to be submitted.

By October 1, institutions completed the reporting template and submitted documentation for the accredited programs to both THEC and governing board staff.

### Satisfaction Studies
#### Student Engagement and Alumni Satisfaction Project

Year 1 of the current performance funding cycle utilizes the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) and the Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE) as the satisfaction standard. Institutions administered the student engagement survey during the spring 2011 term. In September 2011, THEC staff members will prepare an analysis of each institution’s survey results and award points utilizing the scoring tables approved by the Performance Funding Taskforce.

In order to ensure that all institutions maximize the NSSE and CCSSE administration, THEC is offering separate training workshops for community colleges and universities that focus on best practices in collecting and analyzing NSSE and CCSSE data.

The CCSSE workshop, held on March 17, 2011 brought together institutional leaders and research staff to hear the latest from CCSSE staff, share their own experiences in utilizing CCSSE data, and determine how best to move forward in using the CCSSE data. With one exception, all community colleges participated, and TBR staff members were also in attendance.

Leaders and staff from four-year institutions will have a similar opportunity on October 20, 2011 as THEC and the Indiana University staff host a Tennessee NSSE workshop. All universities, from both the TBR and UT systems, have been invited to participate. In preparation for the workshop, each institution has been asked to assemble a team of attendees representing academic affairs, student affairs and institutional research.
On March 1, 2011 institutions submitted their Alumni Satisfaction Project proposal. The proposal will be implemented in year 2 (2011-12) of the cycle. THEC staff reviewed the proposals and found that the vast majority of institutions submitted proposals that continued and reinforced use of the past Alumni Survey to derive trend data. Given this review, the Performance Funding Scoring Sub-Committee was not convened to review the proposals.

**Assessment Implementation**

A continued feature of the 2010-15 Performance Funding program is the peer evaluation of an institution’s use of information obtained through assessment activity, which may include Performance Funding-related assessment, to build and sustain SACS Quality Enhancement Plans (QEP) or Student Learning Initiative (SLI). The peer evaluation of institutional annual reports on the use of assessment results to support a QEP or SLI is conducted by faculty peer teams. During the 2011 spring semester, institutions selected their Assessment Implementation evaluator for the 2010-15 cycle.

The evaluation of the annual reports has changed from holistic scoring to a primary trait analysis (PTA). Due to this change, an [evaluator training workshop](#) has been scheduled for September 27, 2011 in Nashville. Dr. Dan Poje, Assistant Vice-Provost at the University of Memphis will conduct the training. Dr. Poje, a member of the Performance Funding Taskforce was instrumental in the introduction and subsequent adoption of the PTA for the Assessment Implementation standard. Institutional reports and training materials have been transmitted to the faculty evaluators in preparation for the September 27 training workshop. Staff from the governing boards also have been invited to attend.

In January 2011, institutions submitted their 5-year plans to identify their projected annual status regarding their QEP or SLI project. Faculty involvement was evident in the submission of the multi-year plans.

**Student Access and Student Success Standard**

In October 2010, institutions were asked to select the five (5) sub-populations that were particularly important to their institutional mission. Per the Performance Funding Guidelines, institutions were provided up to 13 options. THEC staff provided institutions with historical [graduation trends](#) to assist in the selection process.

The queries and data definitions for the 2010-15 sub-populations were reviewed for consistency and verification. In this process, THEC staff reviewed the data definitions and queries for all sub-populations. These revisions impacted the community college transfers (University Parallel and Teaching) and baccalaureate graduates who previously earned associate degrees. Routine queries have now been established which will be used throughout the cycle to ensure consistency of reporting.
2010-11 Performance Funding Reporting

During the week of August 1, 2011 THEC and governing board staff received the 2010-11 reporting template, bound report and compact discs (QEP/SLI institutional report) from all institutions. THEC staff is currently reviewing these reports and will submit point recommendations for inclusion in the FY 2012-13 Outcomes-Based Funding formula. At the November 2011 THEC meeting, staff will request approval of the FY 2012-13 appropriations recommendations.

Further, the results of the 2010-11 institutional performance will be made public and provide a quality assurance component to the State’s Public Agenda for Higher Education in Tennessee. This reporting will focus on the two broad areas of the performance funding program: quality assurance of student learning and quality of access and success of student sub-populations.