

THEC/TSAC JOINT AUDIT COMMITTEE MEETING

Minutes of the Fall Meeting
Conference Room 8C/8D, 8th Floor
Cordell Hull Bldg.
November 18, 2021

Chairwoman Pam Koban called the meeting to order at 12:34 p.m.

Member	PRESENT	ABSENT
Chairwoman Pam Koban	X	
Dr. Nancy Dishner	X	
Dr. Claude Pressnell	X	
Mr. Vernon Stafford	X	
Ms. Doree Hicks	X	

At the start of the meeting, all five (5) current members of the Joint Audit Committee were present, constituting a quorum. Dr. Claude Pressnell left the meeting at 1:30 p.m., still leaving a duly formed quorum.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Mr. Vernon Stafford made a motion to adopt the agenda. Dr. Claude Pressnell seconded the motion. A voice vote was taken, the motion passed unanimously.

APPROVAL OF JULY 22, 2021 MINUTES

Dr. Nancy Dishner made a motion to approve the minutes from the previous meeting held on July 22, 2021. Mr. Vernon Stafford seconded the motion. A voice vote was taken, the motion passed unanimously.

I. Information Update – THEC/TSAC Bureau Chief Program Briefings

Chairwoman Koban introduced Doug Cullum to introduce each of the bureau chiefs to give an overview of their bureaus.

Scott Sloan, General Counsel, presented information on the Legal Bureau of THEC/TSAC. The Legal Bureau consists of eight (8) members. The Bureau consists of legal, Shauna Jennings, Deputy General Counsel, and Amber Walsh, Human Resources, David Heithcock and Michelle Pieplow, and two of the Governor's grant initiatives, the Governor's Initiative in Vocational Education (GIVE) and Supporting Postsecondary Access in Rural Counties (SPARC), which are run by Mitch Currey and Dr. Brandon Hudson. Mr. Sloan discussed the legal division's responsibility for contracts and grant

contracts for both THEC and TSAC, the Title VI report, the Subrecipient Monitoring Report, and their close work with the Central Procurement Office and the Fiscal Review Committee. On the THEC side, Shauna Jennings serves as the board secretary for the Commission and the Bureau provides legal advice on legal matters for the Executive Director and the Commission, as well as, responding to public records requests.

Committee members asked questions and a discussion followed.

Jason Cavender, Chief Financial Officer, presented information on the Finance and Administration Bureau of THEC/TSAC. The Finance and Administration Bureau is responsible for budgeting, purchasing, payroll, and other accounts payable and receivable. The Finance and Administration Bureau also oversees the capital outlay and capital maintenance projects. In addition, the Finance and Administration Bureau has overseen the campus safety and security initiative. Finally, the information technology and information administration staff are a part of the Finance and Administration Bureau, which includes the technical support, facilities inventory, and data management.

Committee members asked questions and a discussion followed.

Dr. Betty Dandridge-Johnson, Chief Academic Officer, presented information about the Academic Affairs Bureau. The team of twelve (12) employees work in academic affairs, student success, and institutional success. Academic programs are guided by federal, state, and THEC policy guidelines. The THEC policies are approved by the Commission. Staff follow academic programs from inception to termination. Academic Affairs Bureau also focus on programs geared towards the success of Historically Black Universities and student veterans.

Committee members asked questions and a discussion followed.

Dr. Steven Gentile, Chief Policy Officer, presented information on the Policy, Planning, and Research Bureau. There are three (3) main areas in which this Bureau focuses: Fiscal Policy, Planning and Analysis, and Student Information. The fiscal policy staff oversee state appropriations, institutional outcome improvement, outcomes-based funding formula, tuition and fees, and the strategic financial plan. The planning and analysis staff create the Master Plan, Fact Book, and many other reports such as the Articulation and Transfer Report and the Supply and Demand Report. Lastly, the Policy, Planning, and Research Bureau developed a Student Information System (SIS) that is used to collect student data from the state's public universities and colleges. This assists the staff in maintaining and analyzing data in respect to lottery scholarships and reporting regularly to the legislature regarding this information.

Committee members asked questions and a discussion followed.

The Access and Outreach Bureau information was presented by Ms. Jessica Gipson, Mr. Troy Grant, and Mr. Jason Seay. This Bureau is responsible for Adult Learner initiatives, College Access and Success, and student financial aid outreach services. The Adult Learner Initiatives staff is a team of 24 with 12 Navigators, and three (3) Re-entry Navigators for the TN Reconnect program. The Re-entry Navigators are a part of the Correction Education Initiative and work with incarcerated individuals to assist them in postsecondary education achievement for success outside the prison environment. THEC also partners with the Department of Labor and Workforce Development and Department of Health for the development of "One-TN-Connection," which is as an available resource for Tennesseans who may be needing additional resources, such as Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) or Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), by determining eligibility and how to access these resources.

The College Access and Success program staff provide direct and statewide services. The direct services portion include projects such as GEAR UP, which strives to increase the postsecondary expectations and readiness of K-12 students, improving high school graduation and postsecondary enrollment rates, and raising the knowledge of postsecondary options, preparations, and financing among students and families, and AdviseTN, which aims to increase the number of Tennesseans accessing higher education by partnering with high schools and providing college advising services to up to 11,000 junior and senior students across Tennessee. Statewide services include resources available on colleges, financial aid, and other resources that will help parents, students, and local education authorities (LEAs) understand what is available for them in terms of achieving postsecondary credentials.

Lastly, there are eight (8) individuals who work on educating the public on how to apply and qualify for financial aid. This group not only educates but assists individuals on how to correctly complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).

Committee members asked questions and a discussion was had.

Peter Abernathy, Chief Aid and Compliance Officer, presented information on the Student Aid and Compliance Bureau. This Bureau oversees the lottery-funded and state-funded programs. There are twenty-one (21) programs in total that are overseen by this Bureau. This Bureau also oversees the Division of Postsecondary State Authorization which focuses on the authorization and closures of proprietary institutions, exempt authorized institutions, academic transcripts for closed institutions, and distance education authorization requests.

Committee members asked questions and a discussion was had.

II. Audit Charter Component Discussion – Financial Integrity Act and Fraud/Risk Assessment

Mr. Cavender presented information on the financial integrity act and fraud/risk assessment. It was noted that THEC and TSAC complete a fraud/risk assessment annually and are checked on to see if any changes need to be implemented semi-annually.

Chairwoman Koban adjourned the meeting at 1:47 p.m.

Chairwoman Pam Koban

Dr. Claude Pressnell