

**DATE:** January 30, 2014**SUBJECT:** Academic Program Review**ACTION RECOMMENDED:** Information

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As Tennessee's institutions of higher education continue to focus on the goals of completion and student success, there is a clear need for an ongoing evaluation of the health, productivity, and quality of the state's academic programs. The Drive to 55, launched by Governor Haslam in January 2013, calls for Tennessee to reach 55 percent of residents with a postsecondary credential by 2025. The academic programs at Tennessee's institutions of higher education will provide the vehicle for awarding these credentials, and will directly contribute to the state's economic and workforce development resources.

THEC is the approving authority for all new academic programs at public institutions of higher education, with approval of new programs at community colleges delegated to the Tennessee Board of Regents. The approval process for new programs was revised in January 2011, with significant emphasis added to require that the Letter of Intent include consideration of mission distinctiveness, labor supply/demand data and program duplication.

As this report indicates, despite this more rigorous process, many of the new programs approved in the previous five years are failing to meet benchmarks. This is a serious issue of both resource allocation and student success, and as a result, THEC has designated 2014 for a formal review of the program proposal process and the evaluation of all low producing programs.

This Academic Program Review provides a holistic view of the status of degree programs throughout the state, and includes the following components:

**Post Approval Monitoring:** Assesses success of new programs approved within the last five years against projected enrollment and graduation benchmarks.

**Program Activity:** Depicts new programs added to the state inventory in the previous year, as well as programs that have been terminated.

**Performance Funding Qualitative Reviews:** Results of accreditation reviews, consultant evaluations, or academic audits of established programs as a Performance Funding qualitative measure.

**Program Productivity Review:** On-going monitoring of all programs in operation for more than five years is conducted to identify those that are not graduating a sufficient number of students as well as those that are thriving. A schedule for future program productivity review is presented and discussed.

**1) Post Approval Monitoring**

Newly approved programs are evaluated under the Post Approval Monitoring (PAM) cycle for five years at the baccalaureate level and above and three years for pre-baccalaureate programs. This review evaluates programs against enrollment and graduate projections, program cost, and other goals agreed upon by the governing boards and THEC.

Benchmarks for programs are developed by each institution and failure to meet these benchmarks can impact the institution substantially. For example, if the institution does not enroll the projected number of students then there may be a deficit in tuition receipts, and thus, a financial burden to the institution.

THEC can recommend termination for those programs that do not, over the monitoring period, show improvement.

The full summary of Post Approval Monitoring can be found in Appendix A.

**Table 1: Summary of Post Approval Monitoring**

	<b>Programs Meeting Benchmarks</b>	<b>Programs Not Meeting Benchmarks</b>	<b>Delayed Programs</b>
TBR Universities	8	16	-
UT System	9	7	-
TBR Community Colleges	4	17	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>3</b>

Of the 61 programs reviewed during the 2013 Post Approval Monitoring cycle, 21 or 34 percent met the projections listed in the program proposal or exceeded productivity benchmarks. This is a slight decrease from the percentage of programs that achieved benchmarks during 2012.

However, many under-performing programs are meeting at least one of the benchmarks in either enrollment or graduation. This was the case in 22 of the 40 monitored programs that failed to meet benchmarks.

In the remaining 18 under-performing programs, both enrollment and graduation benchmarks are not being met, indicating that the program is in true peril of failing to reach the institutionally developed projections that indicate success.

Perhaps the greatest concerns emerge when a program is completing the 5 year Post Approval Monitoring Cycle, yet has failed to achieve the benchmarks set out in the program proposal. The full summary of Under-Performing Programs Completing Monitoring Cycle can be found in Table 2. Not only are these under-performing but they also are considered low producing programs.

**Table 2: Under-Performing Programs Completing Monitoring Cycle**

<b>Institution</b>	<b>Academic Program/ Degree Level</b>	<b>Projected Graduates during PAM Cycle</b>	<b>Actual Graduates during PAM Cycle</b>	<b>Average Graduates during PAM Cycle</b>
East Tennessee	Early Childhood Educ, PhD	16	1	0
Middle Tennessee	Literacy Studies, PhD	9	5	1
Tennessee State	Urban Studies, BS	9	10	2
Univ of Memphis	Architecture, MS	44	18	3
UT Knoxville	Nutritional Sciences, PhD	17	11	2

There are various reasons why programs may not meet projected benchmarks. Sometimes the implementation of programs are delayed due to difficulty of hiring faculty, inadequate recruitment practices, changes in labor market demands, or other issues not within the control of the institution.

Programs that did not meet benchmarks during the monitoring period completed a Program Productivity Plan that addressed deficiencies and provided specific plans for corrective actions. Although the Program Productivity Plan serves to help improve the program, many of these under-performing programs will ultimately move from the PAM Cycle to the low producing listing of academic programs.

In the January 2013 Academic Program Review report, three programs completed their final year of post-approval monitoring. However, these programs failed to meet both enrollment and graduation benchmarks and therefore remained on monitoring status during 2013. These programs and their current status are reflected in Table 3.

**Table 3: Under-Performing Programs: Monitoring Cycle Extended**

<b>Institution</b>	<b>Academic Program</b>	<b>Average Graduates during PAM Cycle</b>
East Tennessee State University	Theatre, BA	3
<i>Status:</i> This program is making significant improvement with 14 degrees awarded in 2012-13. Recruitment and retention efforts are also improving with 67 students enrolled.		
East Tennessee State University	Woman's Studies, BA	3
<i>Status:</i> Enrollment has increased to 15 students and one degree was awarded in 2012-13.		
UT Knoxville	Reliability Engineering, MS	2
<i>Status:</i> Enrollment has increased to 12 students and four degrees were awarded in 2012-13.		

## 2) Program Activity

The Commission has the statutory responsibility to review and approve new academic programs, while responsibility for program termination lies with the two governing boards. However, Commission staff may recommend termination to the TBR and UT systems.

During 2013, the Commission approved eight programs and the Board of Regents approved 29 sub-baccalaureate programs. The governing boards terminated five programs.

A complete listing of program approvals and terminations can be found in Appendix B.

**Table 4: New Programs and Terminations, 2013**

	<b>New Programs</b>	<b>Terminations</b>	<b>Net Change</b>
TBR Universities	6	4	2
UT System	2	0	2
TBR Community Colleges	29	1	28
<b>Total Actions</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>32</b>

- Of the 37 new programs, the majority were certificate and associate degree programs approved by the Board of Regents.
- Program approval activity for 2013 represents a significant decrease from prior year program actions. During 2012, there were 48 new program approvals. In 2011, a total of 92 new programs (84 programs at the certificate level).
- THEC approved seven graduate programs and a single program at the baccalaureate level. Each of these programs was approved under the more rigorous program approval process instituted in 2011 and is congruent with the institutional mission profile.
- Overall termination activity was very low in comparison to programs terminated in 2012. Termination activity consisted of one certificate program and four programs at the public universities. During 2012, a total of 22 programs were terminated.

### 3) Performance Funding Qualitative Reviews

The THEC Performance Funding Quality Assurance program requires institutions to evaluate undergraduate and graduate programs against a range of measures, ensuring that all degree programs provide an appropriately rigorous academic pathway and meet established national quality measures.

As the completion agenda continues, it is necessary to provide a clear assurance that the quality of academic programs is continuing to be sustained. This assurance is provided via two primary methods:

- 1) Academic audit/program review process
- 2) Accreditation status

**Academic Program Review:** The purpose of academic program review is to ensure that standards of the discipline are being met and that adequate financial support is evident. Each program is reviewed according to accreditation review cycles or at least once every five to seven years by THEC program evaluation criteria.

**Table 5: Academic Program Evaluation by Type, 2012-13**

	<b>Traditional Program Review</b>	<b>Academic Audit</b>
TBR Universities	13	16
UT System	23	0
TBR Community Colleges	8	10
<b>Total</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>26</b>

Traditional program reviews are conducted by a qualified, out of state faculty member that provides an external review of program performance. These reviewers are approved by both TBR and THEC staff, and provide a unique perspective to assist institutions in the quality assurance process. The UT system solely utilizes the program review process for program evaluation.

Academic Audits are carried out by select TBR faculty evaluators, and follow a prescribed process to determine program health in learning objectives, curriculum, teaching and learning, student learning assessment, quality assurance, overall assessment, previous audit response, and support. Effective with the 2010-15 performance funding cycle, associate degree programs that contain embedded certificates are evaluated as part of the respective associate degree program.

**Accreditation Status:** Accreditation by a professional, discipline specific accreditor is perhaps the most rigorous evaluation of an academic program. These accreditors, all of whom are approved by THEC, provide invaluable subject-specific insight into whether programs are truly preparing students for success in their selected field.

Across both systems, 563 programs are eligible for accreditation. Eligibility is determined when all Tennessee institutions agree on a specific accreditor as best representing qualitative standards for each discipline.

Currently, all programs are accredited, except for newly approved programs (85) and two programs in which accreditation has been rescinded or an institution elected not to seek accreditation. This results in 99% of the eligible programs being either accredited or in the process of seeking accreditation. In these instances where accreditation was not achieved, institutions' performance funding scores were negatively impacted.

The accreditation status of Tennessee's public institutions is available for review in Appendix C.

#### **4) Program Productivity Review**

THEC has, for many years, monitored the health of the state's academic programs and issued a periodic report regarding program productivity. Once a program completes the Post Approval Monitoring cycle, it is considered "mature" and is then evaluated through THEC's Program Productivity review.

This process identifies programs that are not meeting nationally-used graduate production benchmarks:

- Average of ten graduates per year over a five-year period for baccalaureate and pre-baccalaureate programs
- Average of five graduates for master's programs over five-years, and
- Average of three graduates for doctorates over this same period of time.

Programs identified as failing to meet these benchmarks are then recommended by institutions for consolidation, inactivation, retention, or termination. As indicated in the program activity report, new program approvals have far outpaced termination actions. Many institutions are continuing to commit resources to new programs while failing to meet productivity thresholds in existing programs.

As a result of this fact, as well as the general need to provide time for a thorough evaluation of the state's academic program inventory, THEC, TBR, and UT have agreed to a one year moratorium on new academic programs, effective July 1, 2014. This moratorium will allow each system to evaluate the currently low producing programs in its inventory and the resources that will be required to improve the program's productivity.

Throughout 2013, THEC staff conducted a detailed analysis of each institution's academic status. This review included a report on new program (Post Approval Monitoring) and mature program productivity. Results from this review were then compiled into a comprehensive report for system and institutional leaders to utilize during the evaluation process.

The timeline for this review is included below.

- **January 2014:** THEC notifies system leaders of formal moratorium on new academic program approval commencing July 1, 2014.
- **February 2014:** Both systems will be provided with productivity data from all institutions and be asked to respond to THEC with a determination of program action recommendation (retention/consolidation/inactivation/termination) no later than July 2014.
- **July 2014:** In partnership with system leadership, THEC conducts review of institutional recommendations; determines if further program action is appropriate.
- **Fall 2014:** UT/TBR communicates institutional findings to Boards for action.
- **January 2015:** In accordance with the findings of the recent THEC Performance Audit, THEC Academic Program Review may include formal termination recommendations.

## Appendix A 2012-2013 Post Approval Monitoring

	<b>Institution</b>	<b>Academic Program</b>	<b>Met Enrollment Benchmark</b>	<b>Met Graduation Benchmark</b>	<b>Met No Benchmarks</b>
1	Austin Peay	Chemical Eng Tech, Associate			X
2	East Tennessee	Bluegrass, OT & CM Studies, BA	X	X	
3	East Tennessee	Early Childhood Education, PhD	X		
4	East Tennessee	Geosciences, MS	X	X	
5	East Tennessee	International Affairs, BA	X	X	
6	East Tennessee	Sports Physiology and Performance, PhD	X	X	
7	Middle Tennessee	Computational Science, PhD	X		
8	Middle Tennessee	Exercise Science, BS	X	X	
9	Middle Tennessee	Forensic Science, BS	X		
10	Middle Tennessee	Horse Science, MS			X
11	Middle Tennessee	Information Systems, MS	X	X	
12	Middle Tennessee	International Affairs, MA	X		
13	Middle Tennessee	Leisure and Sport Management, MS	X	X	
14	Middle Tennessee	Literacy Studies, PhD	X		
15	Middle Tennessee	Math & Science Education, PhD	X		
16	Middle Tennessee	Molecular Biosciences, PhD	X		
17	Tennessee State	Public Health, MPH			X
18	Tennessee State	Urban Studies, BS		X	
19	Tennessee Tech	Environmental/ Sustainability, BS	X		
20	Univ of Memphis	Architecture, MS			X
21	Univ of Memphis	Epidemiology, PhD	X	X	
22	Univ of Memphis	Interior Design, BFA			X
23	Univ of Memphis	Social/ Behavioral Science PhD	X**		
24	Univ of Memphis	Social Work, MSW			X
25	UT Chattanooga	Athletic Training, MS	X	X	
26	UT Chattanooga	Doctor of Nursing Practice, DNP	X**	X**	
27	UT Chattanooga	Early Childhood Education, BS	X	X	
28	UT Chattanooga	Integrated Studies, BS	X		
29	UT Chattanooga	Mathematics, MS	X	X	
30	UT Knoxville	Child & Family Studies, PhD			X
31	UT Knoxville	Counselor Education, PhD	X**		
32	UT Knoxville	Doctor of Nursing, DNP			X
33	UT Knoxville	Educational Psych./Research, PhD	X	X	
34	UT Knoxville	Energy Science/Eng. Engineering, PhD	X	X	
35	UT Knoxville	Higher Ed Admin, PhD			X
36	UT Knoxville	Kinesiology & Sport Studies, PhD	X	X	
37	UT Knoxville	Landscape Arch, MLA/MA/MS	X	X	

	<b>Institution</b>	<b>Academic Program</b>	<b>Met Enrollment Benchmark</b>	<b>Met Graduation Benchmark</b>	<b>Met No Benchmarks</b>
38	UT Knoxville	Nutritional Sciences	X		
39	UT Knoxville	Retail/Hospitality/Tourism Mgmt, PhD			X
40	UT Knoxville	School Psychology, PhD	X**	X	
41	ROCC	Criminal Justice, Associate	X	X	
42	Chattanooga	Applied Science, Associate	X	X	
43	Chattanooga	EMT-Paramedic, Certificate		x	
44	Chattanooga	Fine Arts, Associate	X		
45	Chattanooga	Health Sciences, Associate		X	
46	Chattanooga	Process Tech - Certificate			X
47	Cleveland	Fine Arts, Associate			X
48	Cleveland	Health Sciences, Associate		X	X
49	Columbia	Adv. Integrated Industrial Tech, Associate	X		
50	Columbia	Fine Arts, Associate	X		
51	Columbia	Health Sciences, Associate	X		
52	Dyersburg	Fine Arts, Associate			X
53	Nashville	Fine Arts, Associate			X
54	Nashville	Health Sciences, AAS			X
55	Pellissippi	Fine Arts, Associate	X	X	
56	Pellissippi	Health Sciences, AAS		X	
57	Roane	Allied Health Sciences, Associate	X	X	
58	Roane	Fine Arts, Associate			X
59	Volunteer	Vet Tech, Associate		X	
60	Walters	Clean Energy Tech, Associate			X
61	Walters	Fine Arts, Associate			X

\*\* Please note that all programs that have reached at least 80 percent of their projected goals are considered meeting benchmarks.

### 2012-13 Post Approval Monitoring: Delayed Programs

	<b>Institution</b>	<b>Academic Program</b>	<b>Degree Level</b>
1	Motlow	Emergency Medical Services	Associate
2	Volunteer	Fine Arts	Associate
3	Volunteer	Medical Informatics	Associate

**Appendix B**  
**2013 Program Activity Report: New Programs**

	<b>Institution</b>	<b>Academic Program</b>	<b>Degree Level</b>
<b>1</b>	Austin Peay	Professional Science Masters	Master
<b>2</b>	East Tennessee	Appalachian Studies	Master
<b>3</b>	Middle Tennessee	Management	Master
<b>4</b>	Middle Tennessee	Mechatronics Engineering	Bachelor
<b>5</b>	Tennessee State	Professional Science Masters	Master
<b>6</b>	Tennessee Tech	Professional Science Masters	Master
<b>7</b>	UT Knoxville	Creative Writing	Master
<b>8</b>	UT Health Sciences Center	Physician Assistant	Master
<b>9</b>	Chattanooga	Adv. Gas Welding/Flux Cored	Certificate
<b>10</b>	Chattanooga	Adv. Gas Tungsten Arc Welding	Certificate
<b>11</b>	Chattanooga	Advanced Shielded Metal Arc	Certificate
<b>12</b>	Chattanooga	Advanced Welding Automation	Certificate
<b>13</b>	Chattanooga	Automated Manufacturing	Certificate
<b>14</b>	Chattanooga	Lean Practitioner	Certificate
<b>15</b>	Chattanooga	Manufacturing Technology	Certificate
<b>16</b>	Chattanooga	Surface Non-destructive Testing	Certificate
<b>17</b>	Chattanooga	Vol. Non-destructive Testing	Certificate
<b>18</b>	Chattanooga	Welding and Visual Inspection	Certificate
<b>19</b>	Chattanooga	Welding Automation	Certificate
<b>20</b>	Columbia	Medical Informatics	Associate
<b>21</b>	Columbia	Emergency Med Tech- IV Therapy	Certificate
<b>22</b>	Columbia	EMT-IV Therapy	Certificate
<b>23</b>	Dyersburg	Adv. Integrated Industrial Tech.	Associate
<b>24</b>	Dyersburg	Medical Informatics	Associate
<b>25</b>	Motlow	Information Systems Tech	Associate
<b>26</b>	Motlow	Mechatronics Technology	Associate
<b>27</b>	Nashville	Medical Informatics	Associate
<b>28</b>	Nashville	Healthcare/IT Management	Certificate
<b>29</b>	Nashville	Homeland Security	Certificate
<b>30</b>	Northeast	Entertainment Technology	Certificate
<b>31</b>	Roane	Surgical Technology	Associate
<b>32</b>	Roane	Composite Materials	Certificate
<b>33</b>	Southwest	Adv. Integrated Industrial Technology	Associate
<b>34</b>	Southwest	Adv. Integrated Industrial Technology	Certificate
<b>35</b>	Volunteer	Music Business	Certificate
<b>36</b>	Walters	Occupational Therapy Assistant	Associate
<b>37</b>	Walters	Surgical Technology	Associate

**Appendix B**  
**2013 Program Activity: Terminated Programs**

	<b>Institution</b>	<b>Academic Program</b>	<b>Degree Level</b>
<b>1</b>	Austin Peay	Health	Bachelor
<b>2</b>	Tennessee State	Medical Technology	Certificate
<b>3</b>	Tennessee State	Physical Therapy	Master
<b>4</b>	Tennessee Tech	Web Design	Bachelor
<b>5</b>	Dyersburg	General Education Core	Certificate

**Appendix C**  
**2012-13 Accreditation Status**

<b>Institution</b>	<b>Accreditable Programs</b>	<b>Accredited Programs</b>	<b>Programs Seeking Accreditation</b>	<b>Programs Failed/Rescinded Accreditation</b>
Austin Peay	25	21	4	
East Tennessee	58	52	5	1
Middle Tennessee	54	49	5	
Tennessee State	45	44	1	
Tennessee Tech	34	34	0	
Univ of Memphis	71	67	4	
<b>TBR Universities</b>	<b>287</b>	<b>267</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>1</b>
UT Chattanooga	35	1	34	
UT Knoxville	66	62	4	
UT Martin	23	22	1	
<b>UT System</b>	<b>124</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>0</b>
Chattanooga	26	25	1	
Cleveland	4	3	1	
Columbia	8	7	1	
Dyersburg	6	3	3	
Jackson	10	9	1	
Motlow	5	2	3	
Nashville	12	10	2	
Northeast	10	9	1	
Pellissippi	7	5	1	1
Roane	16	15	1	
Southwest	20	19	1	
Volunteer	15	13	2	
Walters	13	12	1	
<b>TBR Comm Colleges</b>	<b>152</b>	<b>124</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>563</b>	<b>476</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>2</b>