

DATE: January 26, 2017

SUBJECT: Policy Updates: Academic Affairs

ACTION RECOMMENDED: Approval

BACKGROUND INFORMATION: The passage of the Focus on College and University Success (FOCUS) Act during the 2016 legislative session provided the impetus for a thorough evaluation of academic policies by THEC staff. THEC is empowered to provide statewide leadership for the development, coordination and monitoring of academic planning. This Act provides greater autonomy for universities in pursuant of innovation and differentiation, while allowing the Tennessee Board of Regents to sharpen its attention on technical and community college success. Thus, THEC academic policies were reviewed to ensure the academic planning process was aligned with the FOCUS Act while addressing the state's economic development, workforce development and research needs.

THEC staff worked in consultation with the Chief Academic Officers at each university as well as University of Tennessee and Tennessee Board of Regents in reviewing policies related to the academic planning process. Additionally, best practices were researched and incorporated into the policy revisions. Where appropriate, guidelines from the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SASCOC) were also included in the policy revisions. The Tennessee Board of Regents will continue to follow the current process in place for final approval of academic programs at the community colleges. In response to the 2010 Complete College Tennessee Act, THEC delegated authority to TBR for academic program approval at community colleges. In summary, the revisions to the three academic policies and a description of the new policy are as follows:

▪ ***Academic Policy A1.0 – New Academic Programs: Approval Process***

The major revision to this policy delineates the eight distinctive steps in the program approval process and subsequent monitoring for academic programs in excess of 24 semester credit hours:

- Letter of Notification (LON);
- Evaluation of the Letter of Notification;
- New Academic Program Proposal (NAPP);
- External Judgment;
- Post-External Judgment;
- Institutional Governing Board Action;
- Commission Action; and
- Post-Approval Monitoring.

In an effort for transparency, all Letters of Notification will be posted on the THEC website for a comment period. THEC staff will review all comments and documents and evaluate the LON based on established criteria to maximize state resources. Other policy changes include the qualifications of external reviewers based on the SASCOC's Ethical Obligations of Evaluators policy statement.

A companion LON and NAPP checklist has been developed to assist campuses with the reporting requirements. The checklist provides an in-depth description of the criteria referenced in Section 1.08A of the policy. This checklist will be posted on the THEC's website.

▪ ***Academic Policy A1.1 – Academic Program Modifications***

The major revision to this policy included the development of the Academic Program Modification (APM) checklist that is referenced in the policy. The APM checklist delineates the required criteria that must be addressed for academic program modifications request (degree designation change or elevation of concentration).

The current A1.1 policy also served as the policy used to evaluate new academic programs. This criterion has been removed and is now listed in the Academic Policy A1.0 (*New Academic Programs: Approval Process*) and explained more fully in the accompanying LON and NAPP checklist for A1.0.

▪ ***Academic Policy A1.3 – New Academic Units***

A minor revision to this policy defines the types of academic units that will be subject to the policy. Only units that award academic credits such as new colleges, schools, divisions, and departments will need to be approved by the THEC Executive Director.

▪ ***Academic Policy A1.5 – Academic Actions Notification***

This new policy establishes the process for identifying academic actions that must be submitted by community colleges and universities in order to maintain the accuracy of the state's Academic Program Inventory. Following initial approval of the academic program and any subsequent revisions will be required to report to THEC. The following academic program actions eligible for reporting after campus approval processes are met include:

- Establishment of any certificate program less than 24 semester credit hours regardless of degree level;
- Name change for existing academic program or concentration;
- Establishment of a new concentration within an existing academic program;
- Change in the number of hours of an existing academic program;

- Consolidation of two or more existing academic programs into a single academic program;
- Extension of an existing academic program to an approved off-campus center;
- Change of the primary delivery mode for an existing academic program;
- Inactivation or reactivation of an existing academic program or concentration; and
- Termination of an academic program or concentration

Universities will be required to report on these academic program actions three times a year: January 15, May 15, and August 15. For the community colleges, the Tennessee Board of Regents will provide a monthly summary report to THEC of all program actions approved by TBR.

Throughout the year, THEC staff will continue to engage with the Chief Academic Officers, the University of Tennessee and Tennessee Board of Regents to review and revise other academic policies as needed.

Section Title: Academic Policies
Policy Title: New Academic Programs: Approval Process
Policy Number: A 1.0

1.0.1A **Scope and Purpose.** In accordance with Chapter 179 of the Legislative Act creating the Higher Education Commission in 1967, the Commission has the statutory responsibility to review and approve new academic programs, off-campus extensions of existing academic programs, new academic units (divisions, colleges, schools, and departments) and new instructional locations for public institutions of higher education in the State of Tennessee. These responsibilities shall be exercised so as to:

- promote academic quality;
- maximize cost effectiveness and efficiency to ensure that the benefits to the state outweigh the costs and that existing programs are adequately supported;
- fulfill student demand, employer need and societal requirements;
- avoid and eliminate unnecessary duplication to ensure that proposed academic programs cannot be delivered through collaboration or alternative arrangements; and
- encourage cooperation among all institutions, both public and private.

These expectations for program quality and viability are underscored by Tennessee Code Annotated §49-7-202 as amended by Chapter 3, Acts of 2010 (1st Extraordinary Session). This Act directs public higher education to:

- address the state's economic development, workforce development and research needs;
- ensure increased degree production within the state's capacity to support higher education; and
- use institutional mission differentiation to realize statewide efficiencies through institutional collaboration and minimized redundancy in degree offerings, instructional locations, and competitive research.

1.0.2A1 **Criteria for Review.** The Commission strenuously considers the following criteria in order to maximize state resources in evaluating academic programs:

- Alignment with state master plan and institutional mission - Evidence that the proposed academic program aligns with the state's economic development, workforce development and research needs using institutional mission differentiation to realize statewide efficiency of degree offerings, instructional locations, and competitive research.
- Need - Supporting documentation of program need that justifies institutional allocation/reallocation of state resources.
- Sustainable Demand - Supporting documentation that employment opportunities for future graduates will exist.
- Program Costs/Revenues - Supporting documentation that program costs will be met from internal reallocation or from other sources such as grants and gifts. Institutional commitment should be consistent with the centrality and level of priority as described in the academic program proposal and estimated on THEC Financial Projection Form.
- Institutional capacity to deliver the proposed academic program - Supporting documentation that the institution can deliver the proposed program within existing and projected resources.

1.0.2A2 **No Unnecessary Duplication.** The THEC Academic Program Inventory provides the initial indication of apparent duplication or undue proliferation of programs in the state. When other similarly titled existing programs may serve the same potential student population, institutions seeking to develop potentially duplicative programs should consult THEC with evidence to demonstrate that a newly proposed academic program is:

- in accord with the institution's distinct mission as approved by the Commission;
- sufficiently different from all related existing programs in the geographical region (list degree level of similar programs and names of public/private institutions) in quality and/or rigor, costs of degree completion, student success and completion rates, etc.; and

- more cost effective or otherwise in the best interests of the State to initiate a new academic program rather than meet the demand through other arrangements (e.g., collaborative means with other institutions, distance education technologies, Academic Common Market, and consortia).

1.0.3A **Schedule.** The Commission will normally consider proposals for new academic programs at each regularly scheduled Commission meeting.

1.0.4A **Action.** Commission action on a given academic program must follow approval by the governing or institutional governing board and may take one of four actions:

- approval
- disapproval
- conditional approval
- deferral

Conditional approval may be granted in special cases. This type of approval is reserved for academic programs for which the need is temporary. Conditional approvals will identify a date that the academic program must be terminated.

1.0.5A **Steps to Establish A New Academic Program in Excess of 24 Semester Credit Hours (SCH).** The process in developing a new academic program in excess of 24 SCH is multi-staged and includes the following essential steps:

- (1) Letter of Notification (LON)
- (2) Evaluation of LON
- (3) New Academic Program Proposal (NAPP)
- (4) External Judgment
- (5) Post-External Judgment
- (6) Institutional Governing Board Action
- (7) Commission Action

1.0.6A **Letter of Notification (LON).** Upon consideration by an institution to develop a new academic program in excess of 24 SCH and notification to the institutional governing board, the institution may submit a LON to THEC.

The LON must address the criteria for review as outlined previously in Sections 1.0.2A1 and 1.0.2A2. The LON should clearly provide supporting documentation that the proposed academic program

contributes to meeting the priorities/goals of the institution's academic or master plan, why the institution needs the academic program, and why the state needs graduates from that particular academic program. The submission of the LON must also include a letter of support from the President/Chancellor signifying institutional governing board or system office support for development; timeline for development and implementation of proposed academic program; and THEC Financial Projection Form. Evidence of internal funding reallocation and other sources such as grants and gifts should be provided. Grants and gifts which are pending are not considered as evidence of funding. THEC will approve no special start-up funding.

The LON submission must include a feasibility study that addresses the following criteria:

- Student Interest - Normally, student interest is addressed in the following ways: a survey of potentially interested students, a report of informational meetings held to gauge interest, a list of contacts of prospective enrollees, and/or enrollment data for related academic programs at the institution.
- Local and Regional Need/Demand - Postsecondary institutions bear a responsibility for preparing students to meet the State's workforce needs. Workforce demand projections serve as one indication of the need for a proposed academic program. The need for the number of persons trained in any given field and the number of job openings in that field must remain in reasonable balance.
- Employer Need/Demand - Employer need/demand normally in the form of anticipated opening in an appropriate service area (may be local, regional or national), in relation to existing production of graduates for that service area should be provided. Evidence may include the results of a needs assessment, employer surveys, current labor market analyses, future workforce projections, and letters from regional employers claiming need for larger applicant pool. Where appropriate, evidence should also demonstrate societal need and employers' preference for graduates of a proposed academic program over persons having alternative existing credentials and employers' valuing of the proposed credential.

- Future Sustainable Need/Demand - Supporting documentation of sufficient employer demand/need for the proposed academic program that covers a reasonable period in the future beyond the anticipated date of graduation of the first program graduates.

1.0.7A

Evaluation of Letter of Notification. Evaluation of the LON will be conducted by interested parties and THEC staff. The LON will be posted on the THEC website for a 15 day period of comment by interested parties. At the close of the 15 calendar day comment period, THEC will review all comments and documents in order to identify issues relative to criteria identified in Sections 1.0.2A1 and 1.0.2A2.

Based on the assessment of the LON both internally and in relation to external comments, THEC will make one of the following determinations and notify the institution within 30 days of initial receipt of the LON to:

- support,
- not to support, or
- defer a decision based on revision of the LON.

All approved Letters of Notification are valid for a two-year time period and will be posted on the THEC website. If the Commission has not approved the academic program for implementation within two years, the LON is no longer valid.

1.0.8A

New Academic Program Proposal (NAPP). Institutions are responsible for quality academic program development and THEC encourages the use of external consultants in development. The NAPP is to be submitted in entirety to THEC at the time the campus seeks to request an external review and should complement the LON by addressing the following criteria explained further in the NAPP checklist located on the THEC website:

- Curriculum
- Academic Standards
- Program Enrollment and Graduates
- Diversity
- Administrative Structure
- Faculty Resources
- Library and Information Technology Resources
- Support Resources
- Facilities and Equipment
- Marketing and Recruitment

- Assessment/Evaluation
- Accreditation
- Funding

1.0.9A

External Judgment. External reviewers will be required to serve as expert evaluators for all proposed academic programs. External reviewers will not normally be required for certificate programs, but there may be exceptions in cases of large cost or marked departure from existing programs. For doctoral programs, two external reviewers will be required to evaluate the proposed academic program.

THEC will select reviewers from the proposed institutional external reviewer list. Individuals used in the development stage as external consultants may not serve as external reviewers. In keeping with the SACSCOC's *Ethical Obligations of Evaluators* policy statement, external reviewers should ideally:

- be a subject matter expert in the proposed field;
- be a tenured faculty member with associate or higher academic rank, teaching and a record of research experience;
- no prior relationship with either the institution or close personal or familial relationship with the potential faculty involved in the proposed academic program;
- not be employed within the state of Tennessee;
- not have been a consultant or a board member at the institution within the last ten years;
- not have been a candidate for employment at the institution within the last seven years;
- not be a graduate of the institution; and
- not have any other relationship that could serve as an impediment to rendering an impartial, objective professional judgment regarding the merits of the proposed academic program.

In the event no external reviewers proposed by the institution are available or acceptable, THEC reserves the right to approve an exception or propose alternative external reviewers and may opt, when appropriate, to authorize a paper review of the proposed academic program rather than a visit to the campus by the external reviewer.

The institution or governing board will be notified of the selected reviewers, the review modality, dates of availability of THEC (if relevant) and provided a list of questions for the external reviewer to address during the course of the review. Institutions may add additional questions to the THEC review questions. The external reviewer must

provide a written report in response to the questions concurrently to the institution/governing board and THEC within 30 calendar days of the conclusion of the external reviewer's visit.

The institution will be responsible for inviting the external reviewer(s), all scheduling, expenses and contracting with the external reviewers. THEC will provide a summary of the required agenda sessions for the external reviewer's visit.

1.0.10A

Post-External Judgment. Within 30 calendar days of receipt of the external reviewer's report, the institution must propose to THEC solutions in keeping with best practices for all issues identified by the reviewer. Based upon the proposed revisions, THEC may opt to take one of three determinations:

- Support - The institution may seek approval from its governing or institutional governing board and subsequently request to be placed on the Commission quarterly meeting for approval.
- Not Support - The rationale to not support will be provided in writing to the institution within 15 calendar days. The institution must appeal the determination by responding to all identified issues within 15 calendar days of receiving notification of THEC's determination for denying support. THEC will make a final determination within 15 calendar days of the receipt of the institutional appeal and notify the institution whether the proposed changes are sufficient for a support determination. If the institution does not respond within 15 calendar days, the determination to not support the proposed academic program for implementation is final.
- Defer Support - The rationale to defer support will be provided in writing to the institution within 15 calendar days of receipt of the institution's response to the external report. The institution may choose to submit a revision of the proposed academic program within 60 days and seek further external review or rescind the proposed academic program.

1.0.11A

Institutional Governing Board Action. Upon determination by THEC that a proposed academic program will be supported for approval by the Commission, the institutional governing board must act to determine if it will support the approval of the proposed academic program. The institution must provide documentation of board approval to THEC and submit a request to the Executive Director that the proposed academic program be placed on the Commission agenda at the earliest possible scheduled meeting.

1.0.12A **Commission Action.** Proposed academic programs supported by THEC and approved by the institutional governing board will be presented to the Commission for action at the earliest possible scheduled meeting.

In keeping with the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges' principles and federal requirements for truth-in-advertising, students may not be admitted to any program nor may any program be advertised by any public institution prior to approval by the Commission to implement.

1.0.13A **Post-Approval Monitoring.** Performance of the academic program based on goals established in documentation submitted at the time of approval will be evaluated by THEC. The monitoring period will be three years for pre-baccalaureate programs, five years for baccalaureate and Master's programs, and seven years for doctoral programs. A summary of the summative evaluation which may include, but is not limited to, enrollment and graduation numbers, program cost, progress toward disciplinary accreditation, library acquisitions, student performance, and other goals set by the institution will be presented to the Commission annually. As a result of this evaluation, if the academic program is deficient, the Commission may recommend to the President/Chancellor that the program be terminated. Copies of such recommendations will be forwarded to the Education Committees of the General Assembly. THEC may choose to extend this period if additional time is needed and requested by the institution. At the January THEC meeting the Commission will review post approval reports on academic programs that are currently being monitored.

1.0.14A **Delegated Authority for Final Approval of New Community College Programs (Associates and Certificates) to the Tennessee Board of Regents.** Tennessee Code Annotated §49-8-101 as amended by Public Chapter 3, Acts of 2010 (1st Extraordinary Session) directs that "the board of regents, in consultation with the Tennessee Higher Education Commission, shall establish a comprehensive statewide community college system of coordinated programs and services to be known as the Tennessee community college system." Notwithstanding anything in this policy to the contrary, THEC in accord with Chapter 3 and toward the establishment of the unified and comprehensive community college system, delegates authority to the Tennessee Board of Regents (TBR) for final approval of new community college associate degrees and certificates. THEC delegates final approval authority to TBR for the replication of a certificate or associate program approved for one community college (after August 1, 2011) at other TBR community colleges. TBR final approval is subject to the following conditions:

- (1) The criteria for review and accountability (especially justification of need and documented sufficiency of resources and faculty to support the program) set forth in Section 1.0.2A1 and Sections 1.0.8A of this policy must be the basis for the TBR review and approval of new and replicated certificates and associate programs.
- (2) TBR will provide a monthly summary report to THEC of all community college program actions approved by the TBR, including community college Letters of Notification for proposed academic programs.
- (3) TBR will provide academic program proposals and financial projection forms for all TBR approved associate and certificate programs as baseline data for THEC Post-Approval Monitoring.
- (4) THEC will list all TBR-approved community college associate and certificate programs and reported changes on the State Inventory of Academic Programs.

1.0.15A

THEC Authority for Post-Approval Monitoring of All Community College Programs. THEC expressly does not delegate to the TBR the authority for the post-approval review of community college associate and certificate programs set forth in Section 1.0.12 of this policy. All TBR community college programs listed on the THEC Inventory of Academic Programs will be subject to the following THEC monitoring and evaluation:

- Community college associate degree programs and certificates are subject to THEC annual reporting through Post Approval Monitoring of programs for the first three years after implementation and annual productivity evaluations of programs in operation more than three years.
- Community colleges will participate in all components of the THEC Quality Assurance Funding Program, and associate and certificate programs will be evaluated according to Quality Assurance program review standards.

1.0.16A

Policy will be reviewed every five years unless changes in the evaluation process are warranted.

Sources: THEC Meetings: April 22, 1988; January 29, 1997; November 14, 2002; January 27, 2011; July 28, 2011; January 29, 2015; and January 26, 2017.

Section Title: Academic Policies
Policy Title: Academic Program Modifications
Policy Number: A 1.1

1.1.1A Programs Subject to Approval. The THEC Executive Director will have approval authority for modifications to currently approved academic programs as reflected in THEC's academic program inventory, subject to specified provisions. At the will of the Commission, the Executive Director has the right to elevate an academic program modification to a new academic program as referenced in Academic Policy A1.0 which may be considered for approval by the Commission.

1.1.2A Program Modifications to Currently Approved Programs. Modifications requiring approval from THEC are limited to the following changes:

- Change or add a program degree designation when this change does not involve a significant curriculum shift in redefining the program's purpose (e.g., B.A. to B.F.A; M.A. to M.F.A.; Ed.D. to Ph.D.) or a change of degree designation for an existing academic program or concentration per recommendation of a disciplinary accreditation body. These requested modifications may be subject to external review.
- Establish a free-standing academic program from an existing concentration with a steady enrollment and degrees awarded within both the degree designation and all concentrations under that degree for a period of the last three years. This program modification may be considered only if the establishment of the concentration as a free-standing academic program does not compromise the remaining academic program and does not require new faculty resources.

1.1.3A Criteria for Review of Proposed Program Modifications. The Academic Program Modification (APM) Checklist located on the THEC website represents the criteria for a degree designation change or addition or to establish a free-standing academic program. However, the stringency of individual criteria will depend on the specific academic program, and, in particular circumstances, other criteria may be added based on THEC evaluation.

- 1.1.4A Duplication as a Result of Proposed Modification of Currently Approved Programs.** Institutions should examine the potential impact of any academic program modification on current academic programs offered within their institution and existing academic programs offered in public and private institutions across Tennessee. No modification may be submitted for academic programs where annual THEC statewide and institutional degree production analyses indicate there is great potential for unnecessary program duplication. Need for any modifications must be demonstrated to and approved by the institutional governing board and THEC before development of any modifications in these academic program areas.
- 1.1.5A Post-Approval Monitoring.** Performance of any newly established free-standing academic program will be evaluated annually by THEC and reported to the Commission. The monitoring period will be three years for pre-baccalaureate programs, five years for baccalaureate and Master's programs, and seven years for doctoral programs following approval.
- 1.1.6A Program Modifications to Currently Approved Programs at Tennessee Community Colleges.** Modifications of academic programs offered at the community colleges are not required to seek approval from THEC for program modifications.
- 1.1.7A** Policy will be reviewed every five years unless changes in eligible academic program modifications are warranted.

Sources: THEC Meetings: April 22, 1988; April 19, 1996; January 29, 1997; November 14, 2002; April 26, 2007; January 27, 2011; January 29, 2015; and January 26, 2017.

Section Title: Academic Policies
Policy Title: New Academic Units
Policy Number: A 1.3

1.3.1A **Purpose.** In accordance with Chapter 179 of the Legislative Act creating the Tennessee Higher Education Commission (THEC), the Commission has the statutory responsibility to review and approve new academic units. The THEC Executive Director will have approval authority for new academic units. For purposes of this policy, new academic units subject to this policy include colleges, schools, divisions and departments.

- College or School: An instructional unit within a university that usually includes several academic departments and is usually administered by a dean or director. As defined here, the term “college” does not pertain to separate institutions known as colleges, such as community college or technical college.
- Division: An instructional unit that usually includes two or more departments within a college or university which may be administered by an assistant or associate dean.
- Department: An instructional unit encompassing a discrete branch of study or organized around common and similar academic areas and is usually administered by a department chair.

1.3.2A **Approval process for new academic units** - Upon approval of the institution’s President/Chancellor or Chief Academic Officer and/or chair of the institutional governing board (dependent on institutional policy), a community college or university seeking to establish a new academic unit must submit a request that addresses the following criteria to THEC for review and approval:

- Name of the proposed academic unit - Indicate the type of academic organizational structure as defined in Section 1.3.1A.
- Rationale for the proposed academic unit - Supporting documentation should be provided that the proposed new academic unit contributes to meeting the priorities and goals

of the institution's academic master plan and a rationale as to why the institution needs the proposed academic unit.

- Inventory of academic program offerings - An inventory of current academic program offerings that will be housed in the new academic unit should be included in the proposal. Any future academic program offerings in the development stage at the institution should also be included.
- Updated organizational chart - The organizational placement and the administrative responsibilities for the new academic unit within the institution should be clearly defined and designed to promote success of the academic programs within the proposed academic unit.
- Cost-benefit analysis of the proposed academic unit - The benefit to the state should outweigh the cost of the academic unit. Institutions should estimate the effect on funding caused by the proposed change. Supporting documentation should be provided that cost will be met from internal reallocations or from other sources such as grants and gifts, if appropriate. The analysis should include the source of any institutional reallocation. The anticipated revenue from the new unit should be comparable to revenue generated by similar units within the institution.
- Existing and/or anticipated facilities for proposed academic unit - New and/or renovated facilities required for the new academic unit should be clearly outlined by amount and type of space, costs identified, and source of costs in the proposal, if appropriate.
- Letter of support - A letter of documentation from the institution's President/Chancellor or the Chief Academic Officer to support the new academic unit must be submitted. The proposed implementation date should be stated.

1.3.3A

Criteria for review. The criteria set out in Provisions 1.3.2A will generally be used in reviewing requests for new academic units. However, the stringency of individual criteria may vary on the specific unit and additional information may be requested.

1.3.4A **Name changes of academic units.** Renaming an existing academic unit where there is neither a significant change in activity nor a significant change in organizational level does not require Commission approval.

1.3.5A **Reorganizations of academic unit.** Reorganizations involving more than one academic unit require THEC approval if, and only if, at least one of the following occurs:

- net increase in the number of academic units;
- existing academic unit will be placed at a higher organizational level (e.g., the upgrading of a department to a college or school);
- additional costs incurred (e.g., adding a new chairperson in addition to current administrative staff); or
- significant change in the activity of the academic unit with or without a name change.

1.3.6A Policy will be reviewed every five years unless changes in eligible academic units are warranted.

Sources: THEC Meetings: April 22, 1988; January 29, 2015; and January 26, 2017.

Section Title: Academic Policies
Policy Title: Academic Actions Notification
Policy Number: A1.5

1.5.1A **Purpose.** The Academic Actions Notification Policy establishes a process for identifying academic actions that must be submitted by public institutions to maintain the accuracy of the state’s Academic Program Inventory (API). In alignment with Tennessee Higher Education Commission’s statutory responsibility of reviewing and approving new academic programs, THEC maintains the API. The API includes a listing of all academic programs by degree designations, associated concentrations, credit hours, off-campus location, delivery modes, and access to Academic Common Market. In order to maintain the accuracy of the API, institutions must notify THEC of academic program actions as specified in this policy.

1.5.2A **Academic Actions Subject to Notification.** This policy applies to academic actions at all public universities and community colleges for authorized academic programs regardless of program level (with the exception of all certificates more than 24 hours). After initial approval by THEC (or in the case of community colleges approval by the Tennessee Board of Regents), subsequent revisions must be reported to THEC. Academic program actions eligible for reporting after campus approval processes are met include:

- Establishment of a certificate program less than 24 semester credit hours regardless of degree level.
- Name change for existing academic program.
- Name change for existing concentration within an academic program.
- Establishment of a new concentration within an existing academic program.
- Change (increase or decrease) in the number of hours of an existing academic program.
- Consolidation of two or more existing academic programs into a single academic program without an essential change in the original approved curriculum and without a net gain in the number of programs.
- Extension of an existing academic program to an approved off-campus center.

- Change of the primary delivery mode for an existing academic program. The extension to 100 percent off-campus delivery requires additional action if the location of delivery is to be converted from an off-campus site to a center.
- Inactivation of an existing academic program or concentration. If the inactivated academic program or concentration is not reactivated within a period of three years, the academic program or concentration will automatically be terminated and removed from the institution's inventory.
- Reactivation of an academic program or concentration that was placed on inactivation within the past three years. The date of inactivation and the date of the proposed reactivation must be provided.
- Termination of an academic program or concentration. A teach-out plan per SACSCOC *Closing a Program, Site, Branch or Institution Good Practices* Statement and the policy, *Substantive Change for Accredited Institutions of the Commission of Colleges*, Procedure Three, should accompany the notification of termination. As the immediate interests of currently enrolled students and faculty are impacted by the termination of an academic program or concentration, timely communication of this decision to students and faculty is important.

1.5.3A

Programs Exempt from Inactive Status. The following categories of academic program are not eligible for inactive status:

- Academic programs that have not been implemented
- Academic programs that are currently in post-approval monitoring status
- Academic programs currently listed as low-producing status by THEC

1.5.4A

Notification Schedule. All public universities will be responsible for notifying THEC of all institutionally approved academic program actions as outlined above on the following dates:

- May 15 for all actions approved between Jan 1 and April 30
- Aug 15 for all actions approved between May 1 and July 31
- Jan 15 for all actions approved between Aug 1 and Dec 31

The chief academic officer at each university will submit all academic program actions designating that each action has been approved through appropriate institutional and/or governing board processes.

Institutions will use the THEC's notification reporting protocol as provided on the THEC website.

Tennessee Board of Regents (TBR) is charged with notification to THEC for all community college academic program actions as outlined in the Academic Policy A1.0. TBR will provide a monthly summary report to THEC of all community college program actions approved by the TBR.

1.5.5A

Policy will be reviewed every three years unless changes in eligible academic program actions are warranted.

Source: THEC Meeting: January 26, 2017.