

Tennessee Higher Education Commission (THEC)
Tennessee Student Assistance Corporation (TSAC)
Executive Director

General Description

The Executive Director of THEC/TSAC is responsible for setting an ambitious vision for Tennessee higher education, including measurable goals aligned to the state's economic and workforce demands and high-priority strategies to meet and exceed those goals.

This individual must be driven by a fundamental belief that every Tennessean – regardless of income, race, zip code, etc. – has both the right and the ability to successfully complete a postsecondary experience. An effective leader will possess a courageous, innovative mindset, and will focus not only on improving our traditional higher education systems, but also developing and implementing innovative approaches, partnerships and adopting new models, meeting Tennessee students where they are, and continuing to position Tennessee as a national leader in higher education.

The Executive Director must facilitate cross-agency collaboration and community-wide engagements, across postsecondary institutions, Department of Education, Department of Labor, policymakers, and community stakeholders. This role must partner with post-secondary institutions while also holding them accountable to the state's goals and student needs. It is their role to not only facilitate strong relationships and alignment across sectors, but also to challenge the postsecondary sector to provide high quality education and training to ensure successful futures for Tennessee students. This requires a mindset of continuous improvement, including the use of state data systems to identify areas for improvement and regularly establish ambitious goals that ensure all Tennesseans – regardless of demographic background – can both access and succeed in higher education.

The Executive Director will be charged to provide the vision, supports, regulation and resources to ensure that Tennessee: provides a meaningful, high quality and relevant postsecondary experience for every student, leads the nation in higher education research and development, and positions the technical and community college system to be the gateway to additional postsecondary education and/or bridge to a growing career.

PLEASE NOTE: Due to the Tennessee Public Records Law, all applications are subject to a public records request.

Key Responsibilities:

- Provide inspired leadership organization-wide, coalescing around strong culture and team accomplishment.
- Develop and implement a strategic vision and long-term goals for the Tennessee Higher Education Commission.
- Develop and lead the state in innovative postsecondary policies and practices that position Tennessee as an exemplar and leader in higher education access, success, completion, and workforce alignment.
- Hold postsecondary partners across the state accountable to providing gold standard education and training that ultimately equips students for successful career opportunities.
- Lead cross-agency efforts to improve student outcomes, including stronger connections between all postsecondary systems, k-12, and economic and workforce development partners.

Job Duties

- Supervise the review of budget requests from all postsecondary governing boards and the development of a consolidated appropriations recommendation for all postsecondary education.
- Maintain a cooperative and mutually beneficial relationship with the Presidents, Chancellors, and boards of Institutions of higher education in Tennessee.
- Review long- and short-range financial analyses, e.g., develop budget recommendations and appropriations bills to determine progress and status in obtaining objectives, revise objectives and plans in accordance with current conditions.
- Closely collaborate with K-12 partners to improve alignment between higher education and K-12, including increasing access to early postsecondary opportunities and other research-based, innovative learning strategies.
- Continuously collect and evaluate labor and workforce data to inform postsecondary practices and ensure cross-sector alignment; collaborate closely with workforce partners to better understand and meet statewide labor needs.
- Maintain and continuously assess P-20 data to establish and push toward statewide higher education and economic goals, including the closure of historic and persistent gaps in student success by demographics.
- Present briefings, reports, and recommendations to the THEC/TSAC boards.
- Coordinate the participation of the State of Tennessee in national or regional reciprocity agreements.
- Supervise the establishment and maintenance of the state college and university student data information system.
- Supervise the administration of the various student assistance programs.
- Act as the primary spokesperson for THEC including all communications with the Tennessee Legislature, the Office of the Governor, institutional representatives and governing boards, business, media, civic, and other public entities on matters affecting higher education
- Serves as an ex-officio member of the Tennessee Board of Regents, State Board of Education, Board of Trustees of the Baccalaureate Education System Trust, and Chairs of Excellence
- Liaison to the Southern Regional Education Board.

Experience and Qualifications:

- A minimum of five years of progressively responsible state-level policy leadership experience in higher education. Prior experience on a postsecondary campus preferred.
- A master's degree is required, and a terminal degree is preferred.
- Requires a demonstrated understanding of Tennessee public, private and proprietary postsecondary education.
- Ability to understand and function within a highly charged political environment.
- Meet acceptable standards of accuracy, neatness, efficiency, effectiveness, and thoroughness as established by the agency.