



**Commission on Colleges  
Southern Association of Colleges and Schools**

**REPORT OF THE REAFFIRMATION COMMITTEE**

**Statement Regarding the Report**

*The Commission on Colleges is responsible for making the final determination on reaffirmation of accreditation based on the findings contained in this committee report, the institution's response to issues contained in the report, other assessments relevant to the review, and application of the Commission's policies and procedures. Final interpretation of the Principles of Accreditation and final action on the accreditation status of the institution rest with the Commission on Colleges.*

**Name of the Institution:** Tennessee State University

**Date of the Review:** November 2009

**COC Staff Member:** Dr. Cheryl Cardell

**Chair of the Committee (name, title, institution, city and state):**

## Part I. Overview and Introduction to the Institution

*To be completed by the On-site Review Committee.*

## Part II. Assessment of Compliance

*Sections A thru E to be completed by the Off-Site Review Committee and the On-Site Review Committee. An asterisk before the standard indicates that it will be reviewed by the On-Site Review Committee even if the Off-Site Review determines compliance.*

### A. Assessment of Compliance with Section 1: The Principle of Integrity

- 1.1 The institution operates with integrity in all matters. **(Integrity)**  
*(Note: This requirement is not addressed by the institution in its Compliance Certification.)*

#### Compliance

The off-site committee found no evidence of non-compliance.

### B. Assessment of Compliance with Section 2: Core Requirements

- 2.1 The institution has degree-granting authority from the appropriate government agency or agencies. **(Degree-granting Authority)**

#### Compliance

The Committee found that Tennessee State University has degree granting authority from the State of Tennessee, which established the University as part of a State University and Community College System with oversight by the Board of Regents. The Board has established policies for the creation of degrees and programs at its member institutions, including Tennessee State University, because it has been given the power “to prescribe curricula and requirements for diplomas and degrees.”

- 2.2 The institution has a governing board of at least five members that is the legal body with specific authority over the institution. The board is an active policy-making body for the institution and is ultimately responsible for ensuring that the financial resources of the institution are adequate to provide a sound educational program. The board is not controlled by a minority of board members or by organizations or interests separate from it. Both the presiding officer of the board and a majority of other voting members of the board are free of any contractual, employment, or personal or familial financial interest in the institution.

A military institution authorized and operated by the federal government to award degrees has a public board on which both the presiding officer and a majority of the

other members are neither civilian employees of the military nor active/retired military. The board has broad and significant influence upon the institution's programs and operations, plays an active role in policy-making, and ensures that the financial resources of the institution are used to provide a sound educational program. The board is not controlled by a minority of board members or by organizations or interests separate from the board except as specified by the authorizing legislation. Both the presiding officer of the board and a majority of other voting board members are free of any contractual, employment, or personal or familial financial interest in the institution. **(Governing Board)**

### **Non-Compliance**

The Board is the legal body with specific authority to oversee the institution. It consists of eighteen members: twelve public members appointed by the governor; three at large from different geographical areas; one faculty member from a System school selected from three nominees—one faculty senate chair from a four-year and a two institution and a faculty representative from a technical center; one student from a System institution; two commissioners—one from education and one from agriculture; and the Executive Director from the Tennessee Higher Education Commission (THEC). This demonstrates that the presiding officer of the board and a majority of other voting members of the board are free of any contractual, employment, or personal or familial financial interest in the institution. The institution presented policies that show the board has committees and meets quarterly. However, there is insufficient documentation to demonstrate the Board is ultimately responsible for ensuring that the financial resources of the institution are adequate to provide a sound educational program.

- 2.3** The institution has a chief executive officer whose primary responsibility is to the institution and who is not the presiding officer of the board. **(Chief Executive Officer)**

### **Compliance**

The Tennessee Board of Regents is responsible for the selection and employment of the chief executive officers of the member institutions of the State University and Community College System of Tennessee, based upon the recommendation of the chief executive officer of the System.” The primary responsibility of the president is to the institution. The president reports to the board and does not preside over it.

- 2.4** The institution has a clearly defined, comprehensive, and published mission statement that is specific to the institution and appropriate for higher education. The mission addresses teaching and learning and, where applicable, research and public service. **(Institutional Mission)**

### **Compliance**

Tennessee State University's mission statement is “Tennessee State University, a Historically Black College/University (HBCU), fosters scholarly inquiry and research, life-long learning, and a commitment to service.” The mission statement is clearly defined, appropriate to higher education and specific to the institution. It is published in the University's 2007-09 Graduate and Undergraduate Catalogs, the Personnel Handbook, and on their website.

- 2.5** The institution engages in ongoing, integrated, and institution-wide research-based planning and evaluation processes that (1) incorporate a systematic review of institutional mission, goals, and outcomes; (2) result in continuing improvement in institutional quality; and (3) demonstrate the institution is effectively accomplishing its mission. **(Institutional Effectiveness)**

#### **Non-Compliance**

Tennessee State University recently developed a 2010-2015 Strategic Plan that incorporates a mission and vision, goals, objectives, action steps, effectiveness measures and assigns responsibility for implementation. Tennessee State University also has a 2008-2028 Academic Master Plan that is linked to the 2010-2015 Strategic Plan and prioritizes academic programs. They have contracted with an outside company for assistance once in developing a Business Intelligence Plan. However, Tennessee State University did not provide evidence that institution wide evaluation processes are in place that lead to continuous improvement.

- 2.6** The institution is in operation and has students enrolled in degree programs. **(Continuous Operation)**

#### **Compliance**

Tennessee State University has been in operation since 1912. It demonstrated through its catalog that it has been in continuous operation, with fall enrollments in 2006 of 9,038, in 2007 of 9,065 and in fall of 2008 of 8,254.

- 2.7.1** The institution offers one or more degree programs based on at least 60 semester credit hours or the equivalent at the associate level; at least 120 semester credit hours or the equivalent at the baccalaureate level; or at least 30 semester credit hours or the equivalent at the post-baccalaureate, graduate, or professional level. If an institution uses a unit other than semester credit hours, it provides an explanation for the equivalency. The institution also provides a justification for all degrees that include fewer than the required number of semester credit hours or its equivalent unit. **(Program Length)**

#### **Compliance**

Tennessee State offers 52 degree programs: 43 baccalaureate programs, which require 120 credit hours, and 9 accredited graduate programs. At the graduate level, 30 credit hours are required for a degree. The institution also offers associate degree programs, which require 60 credit hours. All these programs are listed in their respective catalogs. A multiple step process is designed to establish new programs. The Program Audit Report validates graduate and undergraduate program review and requirements. Tennessee State University certifies and provides documentation through its undergraduate and graduate catalogs that associate, baccalaureate and graduate degree programs meet the state and regional standards for minimum required semester credit hours. External reviews by accrediting associations and internal audits validate program requirements.

- 2.7.2** The institution offers degree programs that embody a coherent course of study that is compatible with its stated mission and is based upon fields of study appropriate to higher education. **(Program Content)**

### **Compliance**

Program content as stated in the compliance certification is very clear, comprehensive and substantial in the undergraduate and graduate curriculum. The statewide postsecondary Articulation Manual designed to enhance program coherence further strengthen the institution's response to the standard. The program content is validated through program approval and the review process.

- 2.7.3** In each undergraduate degree program, the institution requires the successful completion of a general education component at the collegiate level that (1) is a substantial component of each undergraduate degree, (2) ensures breadth of knowledge, and (3) is based on a coherent rationale. For degree completion in associate programs, the component constitutes a minimum of 15 semester hours or the equivalent; for baccalaureate programs, a minimum of 30 semester hours or the equivalent. These credit hours are to be drawn from and include at least one course from each of the following areas: humanities/fine arts, social/behavioral sciences, and natural science/mathematics. The courses do not narrowly focus on those skills, techniques, and procedures specific to a particular occupation or profession. If an institution uses a unit other than semester credit hours, it provides an explanation for the equivalency. The institution also provides a justification if it allows for fewer than the required number of semester credit hours or its equivalent unit of general education courses. **(General Education)**

### **Compliance**

The committee's review of the Undergraduate Catalog and the University's website, confirms that the institution requires undergraduates to complete a broad, college-level general education program that comprises a substantial portion (34.1%) of the baccalaureate education experience. The institution's General Education Program promotes students' acquisition of a foundation of knowledge across six areas identified as communication; Humanities and/or Fine Arts; Social and Behavioral Sciences; History; Natural Sciences, and Mathematics.

General Education courses support competencies identified by the Tennessee Board of Regents and enlivens the institution's purpose to "increase the student's level of knowledge, enhance the student's skills, and expands the student's awareness" as well as to "promote and nurture students' growth and development as persons who are liberally educated." A broad-based representative committee promotes shared governance for general education and monitors achievement of common student learning outcomes in furtherance of the philosophy that the course are foundational and not specific to any single profession or vocation.

- 2.7.4** The institution provides instruction for all course work required for at least one degree program at each level at which it awards degrees. If the institution does not provide instruction for all such course work and (1) makes arrangements for some instruction to be provided by other accredited institutions or entities through contracts or consortia or (2) uses some other alternative approach to meeting this requirement, the alternative

approach must be approved by the Commission on Colleges. In both cases, the institution demonstrates that it controls all aspects of its educational program. (See *Commission policy "Core Requirement 2.7.4: Documenting an Alternate Approach."*)  
**(Course work for Degrees)**

### **Compliance**

Tennessee State provides all coursework for its degree programs. Both undergraduate and graduate course catalogs provide comprehensive descriptions of coursework toward degrees.

- \*2.8** The number of full-time faculty members is adequate to support the mission of the institution and to ensure the quality and integrity of its academic programs. **(Faculty)**

### **Compliance**

The number of full-time faculty at TSU is adequate to support the mission of the institution and to ensure the quality and integrity of academic programs. Tennessee Board of Regents (TBR) policy 5:02:01:00 defines faculty as "personnel . . . whose regular assignments include instruction, research, and/or public service as a principal activity, and who hold academic rank as professor, associate professor, assistant professor or instructor . . ." TBR policy 5:02:07:10 distinguishes temporary faculty as those whose appointments are for no more than one year. TSU employed 422 (69.5%) full-time instructional faculty members and 185 part-time instructional faculty members (30.5%) in 2007 and also reported that the student-faculty ratio is about 19:1. Faculty credentials are displayed in Comprehensive Standard 3.7.1. TBR policy 5:02:01:05 sets forth expectations for continuous professional development of faculty. Moreover, TSU conducts on-going faculty evaluation to ensure adequacy and relevance.

- 2.9** The institution, through ownership or formal arrangements or agreements, provides and supports student and faculty access and user privileges to adequate library collections and services and to other learning/information resources consistent with the degrees offered. Collections, resources, and services are sufficient to support all its educational, research, and public service programs. **(Learning Resources and Services)**

### **Compliance**

The institution provides appropriate library collections and services. Locally held resources (print and electronic) include more than 400,000 print monographs, more than 200,000 e-books, and access to 191 databases. Appropriate proxy authentication is used to provide access for users off-campus including distance learners. Collection assessments are done in concert with departmental accreditation reviews. In every instance the collections were found to be adequate or more than adequate. Distance learners also have opportunity to check out materials from any Tennessee Board of Regents member libraries including the research library at the University of Tennessee. Appropriate services are provided which enhance the availability of resources including interlibrary loan and relationships with other libraries to share resources. A courier service to deliver print materials three times a week is in evidence. The Tennessee Electronic Library provides statewide access to electronic resources such as newspapers, magazines and reference materials. The library is open 92 hours per week including extended hours during finals, provides seating for 350 persons, and 78

computer workstations. Librarians are appropriately engaged in the provision of information instruction and training. Distance learning students are supported by a designated Distance eLearning Librarian, a website on policies, the online reference service, and assistance by telephone.

- \*2.10 The institution provides student support programs, services, and activities consistent with its mission that promote student learning and enhance the development of its students. **(Student Support Services)**

### **Compliance**

Student support programs services and activities at TSU are in agreement with the mission of the institution, promote student learning and enhance the development of its students. The Division of Student Affairs has modified its mission to support student learning and has outlined assumptions in response to the 2007-2020 Academic Master Plan. Student life comprises a breadth of services designed to encourage career development as well as leadership skills. The Student Union Board of Governors offers speakers, convocations, and programs designed to assist student development and campus community. More than 90 student organizations work with faculty at the graduate and undergraduate levels to coordinate the cocurricular student learning experiences. The Counseling Center offers educational programs in collaboration with Academic Affairs and has recently undergone an extensive program review. The Queen Washington Health Center provides a health clinic that works closely with community physicians. The Avon Williams Campus has a one-stop-shop for student services including International and Multicultural Student Support Services, and Counseling staff. The Distinguished Lecture Series and Leadership TSU programs offered by the Student Activities office appear to be exemplary programs. The Director of the First-Year Experience has partnered with English faculty to prepare a semester-long curriculum guide to incorporate student life skills and financial management into various courses from several disciplines. TSU is developing first-year learning communities for first-generation students with the assistance of a Wal-Mart Grant. In all, the institution provides student learning and personal development opportunities consistent with its student profile and mission. Programs are designed for all students on the main campus and all off campus sites. The one stop shop (single point of access for enrollment services) developed in 2003 at the Avon Williams Campus demonstrates TSU's commitment to assisting the non-traditional student.

- 2.11.1 The institution has a sound financial base and demonstrated financial stability to support the mission of the institution and the scope of its programs and services.

The member institution provides the following financial statements: (1) an institutional audit (or *Standard Review Report* issued in accordance with *Statements on Standards for Accounting and Review Services* issued by the AICPA for those institutions audited as part of a systemwide or statewide audit) and written institutional management letter for the most recent fiscal year prepared by an independent certified public accountant and/or an appropriate governmental auditing agency employing the appropriate audit (or *Standard Review Report*) guide; (2) a statement of financial position of unrestricted net assets, exclusive of plant assets and plant-related debt, which represents the change in unrestricted net assets attributable to operations for the most recent year; and (3) an annual budget that is preceded by sound planning, is subject to sound fiscal procedures, and is approved by the governing board. **(Financial Resources)**

### **Non-Compliance**

A review of the institution's budgeting process indicates a reasonable and sound budgeting process, with final approval of the Tennessee Board of Regents.

The institution has not provided audited financial statements for its most recent fiscal year, and indicates that audited financial statements for the year ended June 30, 2009, will be provided as soon as completed.

- 2.11.2** The institution has adequate physical resources to support the mission of the institution and the scope of its programs and services. **(Physical Resources)**

### **Non-Compliance**

The Tennessee State University campus is comprised of 759 acres including 87 buildings and over 2 million square feet. The institution indicates that the Tennessee Higher Education Commission provides guidelines regarding the appropriate type and amount of space state institutions of higher education should have in their space inventory.

Based upon the evidence provided, the committee could not determine if the amount, type or condition of the space is appropriate for the enrollment and programs offered by the university.

- 2.12** The institution has developed an acceptable Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) that (1) includes a broad-based institutional process identifying key issues emerging from institutional assessment, (2) focuses on learning outcomes and/or the environment supporting student learning and accomplishing the mission of the institution, (3) demonstrates institutional capability for the initiation, implementation, and completion of the QEP, (4) includes broad-based involvement of institutional constituencies in the development and proposed implementation of the QEP, and (5) identifies goals and a plan to assess their achievement. **(Quality Enhancement Plan)**

*(Note: This requirement is not addressed by the institution in its Compliance Certification. If a recommendation(s) is warranted during the on-site review, include only the number and the recommendation under 2.12. Narrative, rationale, and evidence supporting the recommendation, as well as any other comments regarding the committee's assessment of this Core Requirement, should be included in Part III of this report. Delete this note prior to printing the final report.)*

Comment:

## **C. Assessment of Compliance with Section 3: Comprehensive Standards**

- 3.1.1** The mission statement is current and comprehensive, accurately guides the institution's operations, is periodically reviewed and updated, is approved by the governing board, and is communicated to the institution's constituencies. **(Mission)**

### **Compliance**



Tennessee State University's mission statement is periodically reviewed and updated and is current. It was approved by the Tennessee Board of Regents on December 19, 2007. It accurately guides the institution's operations. The Strategic Plan is built upon the mission statement. The mission statement is communicated to the institution's constituencies via Tennessee State University's website, the Undergraduate and Graduate Catalogs, the Personnel Handbook, the 2010-2015 Strategic Plan and the 2008-2028 Academic Master Plan.

- 3.2.1** The governing board of the institution is responsible for the selection and the periodic evaluation of the chief executive officer. **(CEO evaluation/selection)**

#### **Non-Compliance**

The committee found that the Board of Regents is responsible for the selection and evaluation of the president of the university and delegates to the Chancellor the responsibility of conducting of an annual performance review of the president. However, the institution did not provide evidence that the president has been evaluated.

- 3.2.2** The legal authority and operating control of the institution are clearly defined for the following areas within the institution's governance structure: **(Governing board control)**

3.2.2.1 the institution's mission;

#### **Compliance**

The legal authority for establishing Tennessee State University and its mission are found within the Bylaws of the Tennessee Board of Regents. These bylaws indicate the responsibility of the TBR for approval of the mission of the institution.

3.2.2.2 the fiscal stability of the institution;

#### **Compliance**

Tennessee State statutes and the bylaws of the Tennessee Board of Regents clearly outline the authority and responsibilities of the Board, as well as those of the Chancellor and President, for oversight of the financial stability of the university. The bylaws specify that the TBR is responsible for approval of university budgets and for overview of its financial management.

3.2.2.3 institutional policy, including policies concerning related and affiliated corporate entities and all auxiliary services;

#### **Compliance**

The bylaws of the Tennessee Board of Regents indicate that policy making responsibilities rest with the Board. The TBR has a broad and well developed set of policies it has developed for governance of its institutions, including related corporate entities and auxiliary services.

3.2.2.4 related foundations (athletic, research, etc.) and other corporate entities whose primary purpose is to support the institution and/or its programs.

#### **Compliance**

Tennessee State statutes and the bylaws of the Tennessee Board of Regents clearly authorize and outline Board responsibilities for relationships with foundations.

**3.2.3** The board has a policy addressing conflict of interest for its members. **(Conflict of interest)**

#### **Non-Compliance**

The Board of Regents has established a conflict of interest policy (1:02:03:10) for its members; however, evidence was not found demonstrating adherence to the established policy.

**3.2.4** The governing board is free from undue influence from political, religious, or other external bodies and protects the institution from such influence. **(External influence)**

#### **Compliance**

The institution has demonstrated that through its mandated composition with term limits, the Tennessee Code 49-8-203, the code of ethics in TRB Policy 1:02:03:20, and the Conflict of Interest Policy 1:02:03:10, its governing board is free from undue external influence.

**3.2.5** The governing board has a policy whereby members can be dismissed only for appropriate reasons and by a fair process. **(Board dismissal)**

#### **Non-Compliance**

The governing board has a board dismissal policy. However, the institution has not demonstrated whether it has implemented this policy.

**3.2.6** There is a clear and appropriate distinction, in writing and practice, between the policy-making functions of the governing board and the responsibility of the administration and faculty to administer and implement policy. **(Board/administration distinction)**

#### **Compliance**

The Committee found that the institution has demonstrated that there is a clear and appropriate distinction in writing between the policy-making function of the Board of Visitors and the responsibility of the administration and faculty to administer and implement policy. It documents this with the Tennessee State codes and the policies and minutes of the Board of Regents.

- 3.2.7** The institution has a clearly defined and published organizational structure that delineates responsibility for the administration of policies. **(Organizational structure)**

**Compliance**

The committee found that Tennessee State University has a clearly defined organizational structure that is published on its web site. Board of Regents policies 1:03:02:00 and 1:03:03:00 delineate the power of the Board to appoint the president to serve as chief executive officer of the institution.

- \* **3.2.8** The institution has qualified administrative and academic officers with the experience, competence, and capacity to lead the institution. **(Qualified administrative/academic officers)**

**Compliance**

A review of the qualifications and experience level of senior leadership of TSU indicates that the administrative team is qualified and able to effectively lead the institution. Hiring practices, guidelines for professional development and certification procedures are implemented in accordance with Tennessee Board of Regents policies.

- 3.2.9** The institution defines and publishes policies regarding appointment and employment of faculty and staff. **(Faculty/staff appointment)**

**Non-Compliance**

Documents reviewed by the committee indicate that the institution relies upon policies set by the Tennessee Board of Regents to identify and establish clear conditions of employment, to ensure the employment of qualified professionals on a variety of levels and for the operation and management of the institution so as to achieve its goals and educational mission. The institution reports that policy revisions “are generally developed by the Office of Human Resources and submitted to the President’s Cabinet for review.” Reportedly, changes in policy are communicated through e-mail, i.e. the Exchange. However, there is no documentation of these communications. There is insufficient evidence that the institution affirms its role in the development, application, and monitoring of work conditions on the institutional level and that staff are well-informed about policies that affect them.

- 3.2.10** The institution evaluates the effectiveness of its administrators on a periodic basis. **(Administrative staff evaluations)**

**Compliance**

Administrators are evaluated annually via written form, as indicated by the Office of Human Resources. The President is evaluated in writing annually by the Chancellor of the Tennessee Board of Regents. Policies regarding this process are published in HR Policy 6.29.

- 3.2.11** The institution’s chief executive officer has ultimate responsibility for, and exercises appropriate administrative and fiscal control over, the institution’s intercollegiate athletics program. **(Control of intercollegiate athletics)**

## Compliance

The Committee found that the President has ultimate responsibility and exercises fiscal and administrative control over the university's intercollegiate athletics program. The Director of Athletics reports to the president, who annually approves the budget for Athletics. The university has established an Athletics Council to provide advice and oversight on broad policy issues related to the intercollegiate athletics program. The university reports that, "There is no external foundation specifically created for athletics. All athletic fundraising monies are deposited into an athletics state account or a university foundation account for athletics." The Athletics budget is approved as part of the annual university budget and there are annual audits of the expenditures for intercollegiate athletics.

- 3.2.12** The institution's chief executive officer controls the institution's fund-raising activities exclusive of institution-related foundations that are independent and separately incorporated. **(Fund-raising activities)**.

## Compliance

The President of the institution controls the institution's fund-raising activities, exclusive of institution related foundations that are separately incorporated, through the Vice President for University Relations and Development. The Vice President serves a member of the senior leadership team and oversees an appropriately staffed organization to provide oversight of fundraising activities.

- 3.2.13** Any institution-related foundation not controlled by the institution has a contractual or other formal agreement that (1) accurately describes the relationship between the institution and the foundation and (2) describes any liability associated with that relationship. In all cases, the institution ensures that the relationship is consistent with its mission. **(Institution-related foundations)**

## Non-Compliance

The institution cites the existence of one affiliated foundation, that is not controlled by the institution; the Tennessee State University Foundation (Foundation). The committee's review of the charter, by-laws of the foundation and the agreement between the foundation and the University reveals a lack of clarity regarding liability assumed by each entity from this relationship.

The agreement that outlines the arrangement between the University and the Foundation indicates that much of the Foundation's operational support, to include budgeting, tax preparation, accounting services and office space, is provided by TSU without reimbursement to the University by the Foundation for these services. However, the agreement provided only includes approval of the chair of the Board of Trustees and does not include ratification by the University.

- 3.2.14** The institution's policies are clear concerning ownership of materials, compensation, copyright issues, and the use of revenue derived from the creation and production of all intellectual property. These policies apply to students, faculty, and staff. **(Intellectual property rights)**

## Compliance

Tennessee State policies concerning intellectual property rights are established by the Tennessee Board of Regents. The institution has appropriate policies and mechanisms for offering advice on intellectual property rights. The Tennessee Board of Regents policies apply to all institutions in the system and define conditions under which intellectual property is the property of the institution. The institution has an Intellectual Property Advisory Committee which provides recommendations to the President of the institution. These policies are conveyed to students through the Student Handbook (undergraduates), and the Ownership of Thesis/Dissertation document (graduate students) along with a workshop on electronic thesis and dissertations required by the Graduate School. The policies are conveyed to the staff and faculty through websites.

- \* **3.3.1** The institution identifies expected outcomes, assesses the extent to which it achieves these outcomes, and provides evidence of improvement based on analysis of the results in each of the following areas (**Institutional Effectiveness**):

3.3.1.1 educational programs, to include student learning outcomes

### Non-Compliance

Program assessment data is documented in Annual Institutional Effectiveness Report but failed to describe how the results have been used for improvement, nor indicated concrete examples that the results have been used for improvement. The narrative states “each academic unit is required to provide evidence of planning and evaluation activities, including student learning outcomes” however, only four institutional effectiveness plans were included in the documentation (Cardio-Respiratory Care, Dental Hygiene, Health Administration & Health Sciences, and Health Information & Management). One institutional effectiveness plan for the department unit of History, Geography and Political Science was incorporated in the narrative. In lieu of specific student learning outcomes, areas of degree competencies, internships, and public service were assessed. Tennessee State University needs to assess student learning outcomes. Student learning outcomes are defined as the knowledge, skills or abilities that students should be able to demonstrate as a result of their educational program. Assessment data (aggregate scores) should be included in the institutional effectiveness plans so that actual outcomes can be compared to expected outcomes and improvements made when desired performance targets are not met. Remedial actions taken as a result of assessment findings need to be documented in detail such that it is evident that data are driving decision-making across the institution. Tennessee State University offers approximately nine doctorate degrees, 27 master’s degrees and 44 bachelor’s degrees. TSU provided examples of assessment plans for a very small sample of the degree programs it offers. Assessment plans documenting student learning outcomes for every degree program offered at the undergraduate and graduate levels need to be provided as supporting documentation. Additionally, information regarding how assessment activities are systematic and how results are used to improved the effectiveness of educational programs should be included.

### 3.3.1.2 administrative support services

#### **Non-Compliance**

The narrative states “administrative support units utilize a variety of methods to identify and assess outcomes and that the Academic Affairs Division requires annual reporting.” Included in the documentation were institutional effectiveness reports for two administrative units within Academic Affairs; Institutional Effectiveness, Quality and Assessment and The Title III, Faculty Support Center. Provided in the narrative were Delaware Cost Study data, a list of achievements for the Division of Communication and Information Technology, and a description of the ways in which the Student Affairs Division assesses the effectiveness of their efforts. Compliance with 3.3.1.2 requires an assessment plan with expected outcomes for all administrative offices across all divisions, documentation of assessment results for those outcomes and the use of the assessment results to drive institutional improvement. Tennessee State University did not provide this evidence.

### 3.3.1.3 educational support services

#### **Non-Compliance**

The narrative states “the Academic Master Plan Committee on Enhancement of Academic and Student Support Programs has developed an assessment tool that will be implemented next year.” Compliance with 3.3.1.3 requires an assessment plan for all educational support services institution-wide, documentation of assessment results and the use of those results for institutional improvement. Tennessee State University did not provide this evidence.

### 3.3.1.4 research within its educational mission, if appropriate

#### **Compliance**

Tennessee State University did not provide an assessment plan for their Office of Research; however, the current (2005-2010) Strategic Plan does identify two research-related performance measures: 1) dollars awarded from external sources for research and 2) dollars awarded from external sources for research and sponsored programs. The 2010-2015 Strategic Plan sets out broader objectives for research and sponsored programs (6.1.2). The evidence of improvement based on research is demonstrated through the university’s research funds reaching \$40 million in fiscal year 2009, an increase of 15% over 2008. There was an increase in proposal submission from \$43 million in 2008 to \$121 million in 2009, an increase of 65%. The narrative reports the dollars awarded from external sources for research and although it was not a performance measure identified in their strategic plan, the dollars in research proposal submissions demonstrate compliance.

#### **Non-Compliance**

The narrative primarily reported students' perceptions of service learning prior to and after engaging in service learning courses. Compliance with 3.3.1.5 requires Tennessee State University to have a plan with expected outcomes for community/public service, assess the extent to which it is achieving those expected outcomes and use the results of the assessment findings to make institutional improvements. There was no separate assessment plan for community service in the supporting documentation; however, the 2005-2010 Strategic Plan does contain a goal (1.2) on Civic Responsibility.

- 3.4.1** The institution demonstrates that each educational program for which academic credit is awarded is approved by the faculty and the administration. **(Academic program approval)**

#### **Compliance**

Tennessee State comprehensive academic program approval process is well documented via their course action request form, course catalog action request form, approval of academic programs, units and modifications, required proposal for establishment of new degree programs, and approval of establishment of new programs. Their approval of new programs must adhere to Tennessee Board of Regents (TBR) and Tennessee Higher Education Commission (THEC) policies and guidelines.

- 3.4.2** The institution's continuing education, outreach, and service programs are consistent with the institution's mission. **(Continuing education/service programs)**

#### **Compliance**

Continuing education, outreach, and service programs at TSU are consistent with the mission and strategic plan of the institution which is to "foster scholarly inquiry and research, life long learning and a commitment to service. Through the Center for Extended Ed and Public Service and the Avon Williams Campus, TSU seeks to provide opportunities for the non traditional learner through face to face and virtual mediums. and non-credit course offerings for professional and personal self improvement. Noted examples include the Center for Legal Studies, Gatlin Education Services, JER Group Inc. – which offers domestics and international student programs in areas of health care, hospitality, entertainment to special interest courses.

- \*3.4.3** The institution publishes admissions policies that are consistent with its mission. **(Admissions policies)**

#### **Compliance**

Admissions guidelines are published in the Tennessee State University Undergraduate Catalog 2007-2009, and all recruitment materials. The admissions criteria are also available through the institutional website.

- 3.4.4** The institution has a defined and published policy for evaluating, awarding, and accepting credit for transfer, experiential learning, advanced placement, and professional certificates that is consistent with its mission and ensures that course work and learning outcomes are at the collegiate level and comparable to the institution's

own degree programs. The institution assumes responsibility for the academic quality of any course work or credit recorded on the institution's transcript. **(Acceptance of academic credit)**

### **Compliance**

Tennessee State transfer policies are published in undergraduate and graduate studies and research catalogs on the TSU Website. There is a published articulation agreement between Tennessee four-year public institutions, including Tennessee State, and two year public institutions of higher learning that meets specified criteria. Tennessee State adheres to the policies contained in the articulation agreements with Virginia Community College System. Tennessee State does not award credit for experiential learning.

- 3.4.5** The institution publishes academic policies that adhere to principles of good educational practice. These are disseminated to students, faculty, and other interested parties through publications that accurately represent the programs and services of the institution. **(Academic policies)**

### **Compliance**

The Tennessee Higher Education Commission (THEC Policy No. A1:0 and A1:1) sets forth general academic policies regarding new degree programs, the establishment of a certificate of credit, etc. Tennessee Board of Regents should approve all academic policies regarding academic programs (TBR 2:01:01:00). Academic policies that adhere to recognized, standard principles of good educational practice at TSU are published and disseminate in a number of documents to include but not limited to: Undergraduate and Graduate Catalogs, Faculty Handbooks and Student Handbooks. Evidence was provided demonstrating faculty and administration participation in the modification of academic policies at TSU.

- 3.4.6** The institution employs sound and acceptable practices for determining the amount and level of credit awarded for courses, regardless of format or mode of delivery. **(Practices for awarding credit)**

### **Compliance**

TSU employs sound and acceptable practices for determining the amount and level of credit awarded for courses, regardless of format or mode of delivery. AACRAO standards are considered when determining the type and amount of credit awarded. The undergraduate and graduate catalogs house the guidelines that govern the awarding of credit.

- 3.4.7** The institution ensures the quality of educational programs and courses offered through consortia relationships or contractual agreements, ensures ongoing compliance with the comprehensive requirements, and evaluates the consortial relationship and/or agreement against the purpose of the institution. **(Consortia relationships/contractual agreements)**

### **Compliance**



Tennessee State University participates with the other 18 universities of the Tennessee Board of Regents System in the Regents Online Campus Collaborative (ROCC) which offers online degree and continuing education programs. The narrative indicated that Tennessee State University students enrolled in the ROCC programs are given the same exit examination to evaluate learning outcomes that students take for on-campus programs.

- 3.4.8** The institution awards academic credit for course work taken on a noncredit basis only when there is documentation that the noncredit course work is equivalent to a designated credit experience. **(Noncredit to credit)**

#### **Compliance**

The committee's review of the Undergraduate Catalog provides evidence of the institution's report that it does not award academic credit for non-credit course work.

- 3.4.9** The institution provides appropriate academic support services. **(Academic support services)**

#### **Non-Compliance**

Numerous forms of academic support services are available to all students, and faculty that are designed to promote student success. The institution's response to this standard is brief and lacking in specifics. As a result there is little evidence to assess whether the standard has been met. An assessment mechanism to evaluate the academic support programs is being developed but has not been implemented.

- 3.4.10** The institution places primary responsibility for the content, quality, and effectiveness of its curriculum with its faculty. **(Responsibility for curriculum)**

#### **Non-Compliance**

The committee's review of the Faculty Handbook (1989) and Tennessee Board of Regents policies indicate that instructional faculty along with Academic Affairs hold authority and responsibility for the content, quality, and effectiveness of the curriculum. Because the institution relies upon common syllabi in general education courses, the evidence presented indicates that the primary expression of faculty governance revolves around the development of course syllabi by departmental faculty who are informed by "professional organizations" and accreditation agencies, with program assessment processes managed by the Tennessee Board of Regents' "academic audit initiative" and accreditation processes. Additional evidence should be provided to show more clearly how faculty participate in shared governance for decision-making about curriculum and participation in authentic program-level assessment to determine course and program strengths and weaknesses.

- \*3.4.11** For each major in a degree program, the institution assigns responsibility for program coordination, as well as for curriculum development and review, to persons academically qualified in the field. In those degree programs for which the institution does not identify a major, this requirement applies to a curricular area or concentration. **(Academic program coordination)**

## **Compliance**

Tennessee State's Chart of Academic Coordinators (CAC) identifies qualifications and competencies of academic program coordinators. The CAC also describes the role of program coordinators as to their responsibility for program coordination, curriculum development and review in some cases. TSU has assigned academically qualified program coordinators (i.e. department heads) for each major in a degree program, curricular area or concentration. Department heads are charged with the responsibility to coordinate program activities for respective departments. Those departments housing multiple degrees, faculty members academically qualified and/or having expertise in the field coordinate that specific degree program.

- 3.4.12** The institution's use of technology enhances student learning and is appropriate for meeting the objectives of its programs. Students have access to and training in the use of technology. **(Technology use)**

## **Compliance**

Appropriate evidence is provided on the manner in which information technology supports student success ranging from the provision of electronic classrooms to computing labs. An appropriate technology infrastructure exists including wired access to all residence rooms and campus wide wireless access. Software applications supporting specific disciplines such as music education and speech pathology are available. An online portal for email, registration and course management is also available. The institution requires evidence of computer literacy from each degree program. This literacy is largely assessed through a capstone class or project requiring a demonstrated literacy in computer/digital media context. A variety of offices offer faculty support in instructional design, multimedia, and digital content creation. More than 500 faculty and staff have attended these workshops since 2006-2007.

- 3.5.1** The institution identifies college-level general education competencies and the extent to which graduates have attained them. **(College-level competencies)**

## **Compliance**

Tennessee State University in conjunction with the Tennessee Board of Regents has identified general education competencies in the following areas: oral and written communication, humanities and the fine arts, social and behavioral sciences, history, natural sciences, and mathematics. Tennessee State University has utilized Educational Testing Services' Measure of Academic Proficiency and Progress (MAPP) to assess general education competencies. Assessment results were presented for the 2005-06, 2006-07, and 2007-08 academic years. Results indicate that seniors at TSU scored significantly lower in all areas (i.e. reading, critical thinking, writing and mathematics) than their counterparts at other doctoral/research universities. Assessment results have been shared with Tennessee State University's administration and faculty and there are ongoing discussions based on the assessment results about how to improve student scores. Additionally, the Tennessee Board of Regents began requiring course embedded assessments of general education competencies effective with the current academic year. TSU has proposed a QEP topic that seeks to focus on general education competencies.

- 3.5.2** At least 25 percent of the credit hours required for the degree are earned through instruction offered by the institution awarding the degree. In the case of undergraduate degree programs offered through joint, cooperative, or consortia arrangements, the student earns 25 percent of the credits required for the degree through instruction offered by the participating institutions. **(Institutional credits for a degree)**.

#### **Compliance**

Tennessee State University's institutional credits for a degree position is guided by Tennessee Board of Regents policies regarding articulation among community colleges and universities, proprietary colleges, and credits earned through extra-institutional learning. TSU has an established policy that prohibits the awarding of degrees to students who have not earned at least 25% of degree requirements at the university. Appropriate policies and procedures are in place for students who seek to participate in the TSU/Middle Tennessee State University consortium.

- 3.5.3** The institution defines and publishes requirements for its undergraduate programs, including its general education components. These requirements conform to commonly accepted standards and practices for degree programs. **(Undergraduate program requirements)**

#### **Compliance**

Tennessee State's Undergraduate Catalog and the TSU homepage is the public repository for all undergraduate program requirements, including general education components. These are published in the Undergraduate Catalog (37-38). All requirements conform to commonly accepted standards and adhere to policies established by the Tennessee Board of Regents. Catalogs are available online. Program requirements conform to accepted standards and practices of degree programs in higher education. Each program also specifies appropriate requirements in the catalog.

- 3.5.4** At least 25 percent of the discipline course hours in each major at the baccalaureate level are taught by faculty members holding the terminal degree—usually the earned doctorate—in the discipline, or the equivalent of the terminal degree. **(Terminal degrees of faculty)**

#### **Non-Compliance**

TSU is not in compliance with this requirement as four degree programs do not meet the standard. The examples cited in the Compliance Report regarding credentials of faculty by percent of courses taught by faculty with terminal degrees exceeded the 25 percent standard established by the Commission. Whereas justifications are provided, the fact still remains that the BSN in Nursing, the B.S. in Social Work, the B.S. in Health Information Management and B.S. in Medical Technology do not have at least 25% of the discipline courses being taught by faculty members holding the terminal degree in the discipline or its equivalent.

- 3.6.1** The institution's post-baccalaureate professional degree programs, and its master's and doctoral degree programs, are progressively more advanced in academic content than its undergraduate programs. **(Post-baccalaureate program rigor)**

## Compliance

Post-baccalaureate, professional, masters and doctoral degree programs at TSU are progressively more advanced in academic content than undergraduate degree programs at TSU. “The University ensures that the academic content and rigor of its graduate programs are progressively more advanced than its undergraduate programs. (i) The graduate programs meet standards established by the Tennessee Board of Regents (TBR), the Tennessee Higher Education Commission (THEC), and program specific national accrediting agencies, (ii) comply with course numbering systems and course descriptions, (iii) have established processes for curriculum development and/or course and program review processes, (iv) have set standards for graduate faculty appointment, and (v) have graduate admission requirements.” Evidence of the aforementioned was provided. The Academic Integrity Statement found in the Graduate Catalog (p. 31) conveys that graduate study involves increased attention to “personal integrity and knowledge of scholarly methods.” The Graduate Faculty Handbook (2000) provides additional scholarly criteria for eligibility to teach graduate courses and for the opportunity to supervise graduate students conducting research completing master’s thesis and dissertations.

- 3.6.2** The institution structures its graduate curricula (1) to include knowledge of the literature of the discipline and (2) to ensure ongoing student engagement in research and/or appropriate professional practice and training experiences. **(Graduate curriculum)**

## Non-Compliance

Graduate Curricula that include knowledge of the literature of the discipline and ongoing student engagement in research and training experiences are stated in the Tennessee State Graduate Catalog. The Compliance Report states that the depth of the graduate curricula at Tennessee State University may be gauged by the content of course syllabi where learning objectives, outcomes, course requirements, and expectations are outlined (see sample syllabi) [2], but the institution failed to attach a graduate program as an example. Instead, sample syllabi [2] in an undergraduate program (HIST 2100) was provided.

- 3.6.3** The majority of credits toward a graduate or a post-baccalaureate professional degree are earned through instruction offered by the institution awarding the degree. In the case of graduate and post-baccalaureate professional degree programs offered through joint, cooperative, or consortia arrangements, the student earns a majority of credits through instruction offered by the participating institutions. **(Institutional credits for a degree)**

## Compliance

The majority of credits toward a graduate or post baccalaureate professional degrees are earned at TSU. The maximum number of transferable hours allowed for the master’s degree is 12sch’s and 6sch’s for the specialist and doctoral levels. The one joint master’s degree program earned through a joint program requires residency study at both institutions. The requirements are defined for the Regents online degree program which is cooperative program of nineteen institutions that comprise the

Tennessee Board of Regents. Transfer credits are governed by the policies and practices of the host institution selected by the student.

- 3.6.4** The institution defines and publishes requirements for its graduate and post-graduate professional programs. These requirements conform to commonly accepted standards and practices for degree programs. **(Post-baccalaureate program requirements)**

### **Compliance**

Requirements for graduate and post-baccalaureate professional programs are published in the Graduate Catalog biannually, the Graduate School Calendar, and the Graduate School Webpage. The process of review and approval of the requirements are designed to ensure that all courses/programs meet Tennessee Board of Regents mandated standards and are consistent with commonly accepted national standards and practices. The review and approval process includes: departmental committees, department chair, college/school curriculum committee, college/school dean, graduate council, graduate dean and the provost/vice president for academic affairs.

The committee's review of the institution's Graduate Catalog, the Graduate Schools' Guidelines for the Preparation of Dissertations, Theses, Projects and Course Papers confirms that the institution defines and widely disseminates in print and online degree requirements for graduate and post-baccalaureate programs that conform to commonly accepted standards and practices for post-baccalaureate and graduate degree programs. The institution articulates shared expectations for residency and GPA related to admissions and matriculation as well as differences in program requirements. In its publications the institution accounts for nuances among different disciplines and programs, including thesis and non-thesis requirements.

- 3.7.1** The institution employs competent faculty members qualified to accomplish the mission and goals of the institution. When determining acceptable qualifications of its faculty, an institution gives primary consideration to the highest earned degree in the discipline. The institution also considers competence, effectiveness, and capacity, including, as appropriate, undergraduate and graduate degrees, related work experiences in the field, professional licensure and certifications, honors and awards, continuous documented excellence in teaching, or other demonstrated competencies and achievements that contribute to effective teaching and student learning outcomes. For all cases, the institution is responsible for justifying and documenting the qualifications of its faculty. **(Faculty competence)**

### **Non-Compliance**

Review of the Faculty Credentials Table and the Faculty Roster indicates that the institution employs competent faculty members qualified to accomplish the mission and goals of the institution. A high percentage of the full-time tenured faculty holds the terminal degree in the teaching discipline. In cases where instructors do not hold the terminal degree, most instructors hold a master's in the teaching discipline and are qualified to teach undergraduates. However, credential information for a good number of part-time instructors is missing from the Credentials Table and Roster. In addition, there is insufficient information provided for these instructors relevant to departmental justifications so as to allow the committee to evaluate individual qualifications for teaching such as a record of competence and effectiveness (as evaluated by students

and peers), related work experiences, professional licensures and certifications, honors and awards, as well as publications and presentations in the field.

- 3.7.2** The institution regularly evaluates the effectiveness of each faculty member in accord with published criteria, regardless of contractual or tenured status. **(Faculty evaluation)**

#### **Compliance**

The Tennessee Board of Regents has two policies related to faculty evaluation that Tennessee State University is subject to: "Guidelines for Faculty Promotion Recommendations" and "Policy on Academic Tenure for the Tennessee Board of Regents." All tenured, tenure-track, temporary and adjunct faculty are evaluated annually in accordance with the criteria published in Tennessee State University's Faculty Handbook. Each college/school has a faculty evaluation process which encompasses similar criteria – teaching, research, and service consistent with Tennessee Board of Regents guidelines. Student evaluation of teaching is an integral part of the faculty evaluation. Faculty members are evaluated on teaching, research, service and outreach. Students' evaluations of instruction are incorporated in the evaluation. Tennessee State University provided copies of faculty evaluations to evidence compliance with this standard.

- 3.7.3** The institution provides evidence of ongoing professional development of faculty as teachers, scholars, and practitioners. **(Faculty development)**

#### **Compliance**

Faculty development activities at TSU are ongoing and varied. The Faculty Support Center is the hub that provides assistance to faculty in an effort to improve instruction. Noted examples provided are as follows; Faculty Learning Communities; Summer Research Academy; Teaching & Learning Workshops and New Faculty Orientation.

- 3.7.4** The institution ensures adequate procedures for safeguarding and protecting academic freedom. **(Academic freedom)**

#### **Compliance**

Established policies and procedures are in place to safeguard and protect academic freedom at TSU. These policies are defined by the Tennessee Board of Regents policy 5:02:03:30 and can be found in the faculty handbook and faculty contracts.

- 3.7.5** The institution publishes policies on the responsibility and authority of faculty in academic and governance matters. **(Faculty role in governance)**

#### **Compliance**

The Faculty Handbook and other university policies outline the responsibility and authority of faculty in academic and governance matters. Faculty members are well represented in various university standing and ad hoc committees, and their engagement includes the development and oversight of academic programs and policies, policies and procedures affecting faculty employment, approval of new or

revised courses and certificates, and new degrees. The Faculty Senate officers meet regularly with the provost and president to share concerns and information.

- 3.8.1** The institution provides facilities and learning/information resources that are appropriate to support its teaching, research, and service mission. **(Learning/information resources)**

#### **Non-Compliance**

The institution provides two libraries – one on its main campus and the other on the downtown campus. Hours of operation are appropriate. Both libraries were renovated in the last 5 years; however the report acknowledges that “the square feet of usable space for both campus libraries is inadequate.” According to the institution, usable space for both libraries is inadequate for the student population and for collections. Library satisfaction surveys also indicate a need for a larger information commons. No plans are in evidence for addressing those concerns. Services and collections are assessed each semester via a Library User Satisfaction Survey. The institution indicates that results are used to improve services but no specific evidence of that is provided.

- 3.8.2** The institution ensures that users have access to regular and timely instruction in the use of the library and other learning/information resources. **(Instruction of library use)**

#### **Compliance**

The institution provides an appropriate array of instruction opportunities ranging from one on one consultation at the reference desk, by phone and by email to library orientation and course specific assignment in concert with faculty instructors. The data provided reveals a sustained and growing delivery of in-class instruction which reaches approximately 3,500 to 4,000 students per year. The library indicates a high level of satisfaction with the library orientations from student evaluations. The evidence provided is for 2004 and 2005 but no more recent student evaluations are provided. The library has also adopted new best practices in the delivery of instruction which focus on embedding instruction in class assignments.

- 3.8.3** The institution provides a sufficient number of qualified staff—with appropriate education or experiences in library and/or other learning/information resources—to accomplish the mission of the institution. **(Qualified staff)**

#### **Compliance**

The institution provides sufficient, qualified staff (librarians and support staff to accomplish the mission of the institution as evidenced in the acceptable scores in their LibQual survey results. The institution self reports that the library faculty staffing is somewhat comparable to the peer institutions and the number of support staff is below the number of support staff employed at peer libraries. The report further notes that the faculty staffing levels rank below the median (21) of the American College and Research Libraries 2006 Academic Library Trends and Statistics. The number of support staff is also consistently below the median level (26) of the ACRL trends and statistics. The librarians have appropriate Masters of Library Science degrees from ALA-accredited institutions.

- 3.9.1** The institution publishes a clear and appropriate statement of student rights and responsibilities and disseminates the statement to the campus community. **(Student rights)**

**Compliance**

Students' due process rights and responsibilities are published in the *Student Handbook* which is distributed annually. This information is also made available at New Student Orientation and is posted on the institutional website. The Office of Student Conduct and Mediation oversees these procedures and dissemination of information.

- 3.9.2** The institution protects the security, confidentiality, and integrity of its student records and maintains special security measures to protect and back up data. **(Student records).**

**Compliance**

TSU has explicit policies to protect the security, confidentiality and integrity of student records. Procedures granting access to educational records is clearly defined in accordance with Tennessee Board of Regents Policy No. 3.02:03:00. Sungard Banner software is utilized to secure student records. Paper records from 1912-1988 are stored in fire proof file cabinets and also stored off campus.

- 3.9.3** The institution employs qualified personnel to ensure the quality and effectiveness of its student affairs programs. **(Qualified staff)**

**Compliance**

The Division of Student Affairs Vice President has more than 25 years experience from multiple institutions. Directors and senior administrators possess the academic credentials and leadership experience needed to lead the division in enhancing student learning and development. The revised mission statement and strategic plan indicates that the personnel are providing expertise to ensure the quality and effectiveness of its student affairs areas in keeping with the institutional mission.

- 3.10.1** The institution's recent financial history demonstrates financial stability. **(Financial stability)**

**Non-Compliance**

TSU is a member of the Tennessee Board of Regents System and is audited annually by the Tennessee Comptroller of the Treasury. Tennessee State University has provided audited financial statements through June 30, 2007. The audits are conducted by the Tennessee Comptroller of the Treasury. The committee's review of the 2005, 2006 and 2007 audited financials indicates overall positive trends and no major findings related to the University's financials or system of internal controls.

The State of Tennessee provides enrollment driven funding for its institutions of higher education. The formula structure protects institutions from major swings in enrollment,



either up or down, to provide institutions an opportunity to adjust to shifts in funding. Additionally, institutions of higher education governed by the Tennessee Board of Regents are required to maintain 2% of educational and general expenditures in reserve. These reserves are also intended to protect institutions during times of decreased funding.

Enrollment data provided by the University indicates a gradual decline in enrollment over the period from 2004 to 2008. This trend coupled with a lack of financial statements or ratios for fiscal years 2008 and 2009 prevent a reasonable assessment of ongoing financial stability based upon current financial data.

- 3.10.2** The institution provides financial profile information on an annual basis and other measures of financial health as requested by the Commission. All information is presented accurately and appropriately and represents the total operation of the institution. **(Submission of financial statements)**.

#### **Compliance**

Tennessee State University has provided the financial profile information and measures of financial health as requested by the Commission.

- \*3.10.3** The institution audits financial aid programs as required by federal and state regulations. **(Financial aid audits)**

#### **Compliance**

Tennessee State University is audited annually by the State of Tennessee Comptroller of the Treasury – Division of State Audit. This audit is a segment of the organization wide audit of the State of Tennessee in compliance with the Single Audit Act and includes review of federal financial assistance programs.

- 3.10.4** The institution exercises appropriate control over all its financial resources. **(Control of finances)**

#### **Compliance**

Tennessee State University has an appropriately developed business support organization that monitors and manages the financial resources of the University. Additionally, the University has a well developed set of budgetary and financial policies in place to ensure appropriate control over its financial resources, and that compliance with Tennessee Board of Regents policies is achieved.

Financial controls are enhanced by the activities of the Internal Audit department that reports directly to the President of the University as well as to the Director of System Wide Internal Audit for the Tennessee Board of Regents. Additionally, an annual risk assessment is performed by the institution to identify risk areas and to develop management and audit plans to address this risk. Finally, the State of Tennessee Comptroller of the Treasury – Division of Audits conducts an annual audit of the financial statements and internal controls. A review of the most recent reports provided does not indicate any significant findings.

- 3.10.5** The institution maintains financial control over externally funded or sponsored research and programs. **(Control of sponsored research/external funds)**

**Non-Compliance**

The Tennessee State University Division of Research and Sponsored Projects (RSP), together with the General Accounting Office, are responsible for ensuring appropriate financial controls over externally funded research and sponsored project. The University has developed a Principal Investigator's Handbook that provides research administrators a robust set of guidelines to be used in developing their proposal and managing the project if awarded.

Enhancing controls over research and external funds are the annual audits by the Comptroller of the Treasury – Division of State Audits, as well as audit activity by the Office of Internal Audit.

The University describes a program that provides appropriate controls, however little evidence was provided to support the narrative. Although the Principal Investigator's Handbook was provided, no additional documentation of internal or external audits of sponsored programs, organizational structure, financial policies or staffing was provided.

- 3.11.1** The institution exercises appropriate control over all its physical resources. **(Control of physical resources)**

**Non-Compliance**

Tennessee State University places primary responsibility over proper stewardship of its physical resources on the Vice President for Business Affairs. The departments within the Division of Business Affairs are responsible for, among other duties: procurement, property administration, facilities management, construction and risk management. The University's narrative describes a facilities management program that strives to provide efficient and effective services. The narrative further discusses construction planning/budgeting and some aspects of risk management.

The narrative and evidence provided do not provide information related to property administration/management procedures. This lack of information makes it difficult to adequately assess whether the institution has appropriate controls over its physical assets.

- 3.11.2** The institution takes reasonable steps to provide a healthy, safe, and secure environment for all members of the campus community. **(Institutional environment)**

**Compliance**

A review of Tennessee State University's organizational and policy framework indicate appropriate systems to ensure a safe, healthy and secure environment for the campus community.

The TSU Police Department's officers are certified by the Tennessee Peace Officers Standards and Training Commission. Communications dispatchers and the crime

prevention counselor are also appropriately credentialed. The Police and Facilities department engage in regular drills for emergency situations such as active shooter or tornado response. The University also has an outdoor warning system in place in the event of emergency and it has established an emergency response plan.

The Environmental Health and Safety Services office is responsible for overall campus safety conditions and workforce safety programs. Its primary responsibilities related to laboratory safety, inspection and maintenance of fire suppression systems, radiation and bio-safety.

- \*3.11.3 The institution operates and maintains physical facilities, both on and off campus, that appropriately serve the needs of the institution's educational programs, support services, and other mission-related activities. **(Physical facilities)**

### **Non-Compliance**

The Tennessee State University campus is comprised of 759 acres including 87 buildings and over 2 million square feet. The institution indicates that the Tennessee Higher Education Commission provides guidelines regarding the appropriate type and amount of space state institutions of higher education should have in their space inventory. Additionally, the institution's narrative indicates that the university conducts regular facility surveys that are submitted to the Tennessee Board of Regents. However, no evidence or documentation related to the adequacy, appropriateness or condition of the university's facilities was provided.

Based upon the evidence provided, the committee could not determine if the amount, type or condition of the space is appropriate for the enrollment and programs offered by the university.

- 3.12.1 The institution notifies the Commission of changes in accordance with the substantive change policy and, when required, seeks approval prior to the initiation of changes. **(Substantive change)**

### **Compliance**

Tennessee State University has demonstrated that it has notified the Commission in advance of substantive changes. Since June of 2003, it has notified the Commission and received prior approval for 22 of 23 degree additions or changes (one is pending). The institution has listed the dates of notification and approval for these changes and has provided documentation of Commission approval for one of these changes.

- 3.13.1 The institution complies with the policies of the Commission on Colleges. **(Policy compliance)**  
*(Note: This requirement is not addressed by the institution in its Compliance Certification.)*

### **Comment:**

The off-site committee found no evidence of non-compliance.

- 3.14.1** A member or candidate institution represents its accredited status accurately and publishes the name, address, and telephone number of the Commission in accordance with Commission requirements and federal policy. **(Publication of accreditation status)**

**Compliance**

Tennessee State documents that it represents its accreditation status with the Commission in its undergraduate and graduate catalogs.

PRELIMINARY FINDINGS OF THE COMMITTEE

## D. Assessment of Compliance with Section 4: Federal Requirements

- \*4.1 The institution evaluates success with respect to student achievement including, as appropriate, consideration of course completion, state licensing examinations, and job placement rates. **(Student achievement)**

### Compliance

Tennessee State University utilizes the Measure of Academic Proficiency and Progress (MAPP) to assess seniors' skills in the areas of critical thinking, reading, writing, mathematics, humanities, social sciences and natural sciences. Test results from 2005-06, 2006-07 and 2007-08 were provided in the supporting documentation. Tennessee State University indicates in its narrative that it uses professional certification, licensure exams and completion rates to evaluate success with respect to student achievement. Tennessee State University did not indicate whether they monitor job placement rates through alumni surveys.

- \*4.2 The institution's curriculum is directly related and appropriate to the purpose and goals of the institution and the diplomas, certificates, or degrees awarded. **(Program curriculum)**

### Compliance

TSU's curriculum is directly related and appropriate to the purpose and goals of the institution. The institution offers a variety of degree programs that support the mission which is to "foster scholarly inquiry and research, life long learning and commitment to service. Curriculum development at TSU is based on the Tennessee Board of Regents requirements. Additionally, faculty involvement is evident in the initiation and development of curricular changes.

- \*4.3 The institution makes available to students and the public current academic calendars, grading policies, and refund policies. **(Publication of policies)**

### Compliance

The Tennessee State University calendars, grading and refund policies are printed in the graduate and undergraduate catalogs and available on line at the various college websites. The Student Handbook also publishes the academic calendars, grading and refund policies annually.

- \*4.4 Program length is appropriate for each of the institution's educational programs. **(Program length)**

### Compliance

Program length is appropriate for each of TSU's educational programs and is consistent with standard practices in higher education. Changes made to program follow a formal process that is initiated by the faculty at the departmental level with final approval by the appropriate governing body.

- \*4.5 The institution has adequate procedures for addressing written student complaints and is responsible for demonstrating that it follows those procedures when resolving student complaints. **(Student complaints)**

**Compliance**

Students may obtain a complaint form from multiple locations on campus and at the One-Stop-Shop located on the Avon Williams Campus. The process will be published in the 2010 Student Handbook. The form is also available on line. The complaint is logged, assigned a number, and forwarded to the appropriate vice president for response. Several examples of resolution of complaints were provided indicating a timely, appropriate process for addressing student concerns.

- \*4.6 Recruitment materials and presentations accurately represent the institution's practices and policies. **(Recruitment materials)**

**Compliance**

Admissions criteria and related policies are clearly articulated in publications as well as online. They are reviewed in accordance with Tennessee Board of Regents policy 2.03:00. Deadlines for application, residence requirements, and tuition and fee information are made available through the Future Tiger website, the catalog and appropriate web sites. The Office of Admissions Recruiter Training manual appears to be complete and consistent with regard to admissions standards.

- \*4.7 The institution is in compliance with its program responsibilities under Title IV of the 1998 Higher Education Amendments. **(Title IV program responsibilities)**

**Non-Compliance**

A review of materials provided, including the annual audit by the Comptroller of the Treasury – Division of State Audits indicate that Tennessee State University is in compliance with its obligations under Title IV of the 1998 Higher Education Amendments. However, since the last audited financials provided are for the year ended June 2007, current compliance status cannot be assessed until those audit reports are received.

- E. **Additional Observations regarding strengths and weaknesses of the institution. (optional).**

### Part III. Assessment of the Quality Enhancement Plan

To be completed by the On-Site Review Committee.

#### A. Brief description of the institution's Quality Enhancement Plan

#### B. Analysis of the Acceptability of the Quality Enhancement Plan

1. **Broad-based Process.** *The institution uses a broad-based institutional process for identifying key issues emerging from institutional assessment.*
2. **Focus of the Plan.** *The institution identifies a significant issue that (1) focuses on learning outcomes and/or the environment supporting student learning and (2) accomplishes the mission of the institution.*
3. **Institutional Capability for the Initiation and Continuation of the Plan.** *The institution provides evidence that it has sufficient resources to initiate, implement, sustain, and complete the QEP.*
4. **Broad-based Involvement of the Community.** *The institution demonstrates that all aspects of its community were involved in the development and proposed implementation of the Plan.*
5. **Assessment of the Plan.** *The institution demonstrates that it has goals and a plan to assess their achievement.*

#### C. Analysis and Comments for Strengthening the QEP

**APPENDIX A**

**Roster of the On-Site Review Committee**

PRELIMINARY FINDINGS OF THE COMMITTEE



**APPENDIX B**

**Off-Campus Sites or Distance Learning Programs Reviewed**

PRELIMINARY FINDINGS OF THE COMMITTEE

**APPENDIX C**

**List of Recommendations  
Cited in the Report of the Reaffirmation Committee**

PRELIMINARY FINDINGS OF THE COMMITTEE

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