

Tennessee Board of Regents Presidential Search Process FAQs for Community Colleges

(This document was updated in June 2012 to reflect a recent change in State law that will allow applicants to request their application materials remain confidential and not open for public inspection unless the candidate is selected as a finalist for the position.)

1. Who decides on the next president of a TBR community college?

The Chancellor of the TBR system, advised by a committee of 14 or more, including up to 6 members of the Board, recommends one candidate to the TBR Board. The Board either accepts or rejects that recommendation.

2. What are the steps in the process?

Each search is slightly different, but this is the “typical” process:

- The Board of Regents approves presidential search criteria setting forth the qualifications for the job.
- As Chairman of the Board of Regents, the Governor appoints one board member as chairperson of the search committee and up to 5 additional board members to sit on the committee.
- Ads are placed in the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, *Diverse Issues in Higher Education* and *HigherEdJobs.com* asking for resumes from people who are interested in being considered, and relevant national associations and higher education systems are notified of the opening.
- Simultaneously, anyone who wishes to do so may send a letter of application or nomination to the following address:

Office of the Chancellor
Tennessee Board of Regents
1415 Murfreesboro Rd., Suite 340
Nashville, TN 37217-2833

Or

chancellor@tbr.edu

- Occasionally, a professional search firm may be used to assist with the generation of applicants from a nationwide pool.
- All nominees and applicants are sent a form requesting voluntary submission of information related to access and diversity, including race and gender.
- **As a result of recent changes in the law, candidates may choose to keep their applications and related materials confidential unless or until they are selected as a finalist for the president’s position.**
- The Chancellor and the Board member designated as chairperson decide on nominees to the search committee from the relevant institution’s faculty, staff, students, alumni and community constituencies. By Board policy, there must be
 - two faculty members, one of whom is chairman of the Faculty Assembly or his or her designee;

- two students, one of whom is president of the Student Government Association or his or her designee;
 - one alumnus;
 - one support employee;
 - one administrator;
 - one representative from the institution's business community;
 - at least one member from the community at large; and
 - other representatives as appropriate.
- The committee holds its first meeting to agree upon the rest of the process/schedule for the search, including interview dates with committee.
 - Traditionally, 3-5 finalists are invited to the campus for daylong visits to meet with faculty, students, staff, alumni and community groups.
 - The advisory committee members let the Chancellor know their views on the candidates.
 - Members of the faculty, staff, students and community may also let the Chancellor know their views.
 - The Chancellor reaches a decision, talks with the recommended candidate about salary and other issues, and submits one name to the Board for approval.

3. How are people selected for the presidential advisory search committee?

The Chancellor and the committee chair may consult a variety of local leaders, both on and off campus, to determine the off-campus constituencies that should be represented on the advisory committee. Typically, this could include members of the institution's board and/or foundation, business leaders, alumni, minority group representatives, religious leaders and elected representatives to the state legislature. The Chancellor and committee chair also work with the institution to ensure that all on-campus constituencies are represented, including faculty, staff and students.

4. What does the advisory committee actually do?

The committee bears the primary responsibility for screening applicants and reviewing the qualifications and suitability of the candidates, but it serves in an advisory capacity to the Chancellor, meaning that the committee does not select the candidate to be presented to the TBR Board for approval.

~~**5. Are the committee meetings open to the public?**~~

~~By TBR Board policy, all meetings of presidential search committees are open to the public and press to listen to the proceedings. The public and the press are not permitted to participate in the meetings. This section is currently under consideration for revision in order to comply with the new State law, which allows applicants to remain confidential.~~

6. Who pays the expenses of the search?

The institution for which the search is conducted is responsible for all expenses. Most travel expenses incurred by the Chancellor and the committee members from the TBR Board during a search are paid from the TBR budget with the exception of lodging during the interview process, which is typically rolled into a master bill paid by the institution. In some cases, an institution's foundation may pay some of the expenses, if, for example, a search firm is hired to identify candidates.

7. What happens after all the candidates have been interviewed?

The committee typically does not meet again after all the interviews have been concluded. Rather, each member lets the Chancellor know his or her views, which the Chancellor takes into consideration in reaching his decision. The Chancellor also welcomes the views of any groups on or off campus who have met with the candidates.

8. Why does the process take so long?

The presidential search process was deliberately designed to be an inclusive one, involving as many of the groups and individuals as practical who are concerned about an institution's next president. Whenever there are that many people involved, it is time-consuming to coordinate schedules, set up meetings, make logistical arrangements and so forth. Also there are a number of steps in the process, and committee members are not able to devote full time to their search responsibilities. An additional factor is that the candidates themselves are employed and may be located at some distance, so their schedules and other commitments must be taken into account. On average, from start to finish, a presidential search requires about six months.