ETSU Response to Proposed Strategic Goals and Metrics, 2010-15

February 17, 2010

General Observations

1. Although we understand that the Board approved the goals associated with each strategic priority, we think these goals need careful editing for clarity and conciseness. Hence we comment on both the goals and the metrics.

2. We appreciate reassurances that TBR institutions will report on the metrics but will not necessarily have to set goals for improving their performance on every metric. We remain concerned, however, that scrutiny of the System's performance on the metrics will translate into pressure for all institutions to improve their performance, whether or not doing so is in accord with their missions and institutional goals.   If others share our concern, we urge the Oversight Committee to clarify how the Board will evaluate institutions' performance on the metrics.

Priority, Goal and Metric	ETSU Response
ACCESS PRIORITY	
Goal: In order to increase access at all levels, the TBR system will expand the use of technology to increase and sustain access to post-secondary education and workforce development.	**Proposed clarification of goal:** ~~In order to increase access at all levels,~~The TBR system and its institutions will expand the use of technology to increase ~~and sustain access to~~ participation in post-secondary education and workforce development. [Explanation: The insertion makes the goal consistent with others below. Also, the proposed indicator suggests that the aim is to increase participation, not merely access.]
Proposed System-Wide Primary Indicator: FTE by term of distance education enrollment **Metric:** Enrollment extract that will include campus-based, RODP, and ROCC online courses as well as ITV, video and other types of distance education, technology-based courses as differentiated by delivery method	**Response to metric:** 1. We believe unduplicated headcount enrollment in distance education is a better indicator of participation (and therefore access) than FTE. It would, of course, be possible to use both measures. 2. Will the delivery method field in Banner identify courses that are chiefly on-ground but are also delivered via technology (e.g., Wimba) to remote learners? If not, we will underreport participation in distance education. 3. Will participation in distance education be broken out by class level, e.g., 1xxx-2xxx, 3xxx-4xxx, and graduate?

Priority, Goal and Metric	ETSU Response
Goal: In order to increase access at all levels, the TBR system will develop a methodology to utilize access and diversity resources to implement best practices for increasing participation levels of traditionally underserved populations.	**Proposed clarification of goal:** ~~In order to increase access at all levels,~~ The TBR system and its institutions will ~~develop a methodology to utilize access and diversity resources to implement best practices for~~ ~~increasing~~ increase participation ~~levels of~~ in post-secondary education by traditionally underserved populations. [Explanation: As originally written the goal could be met merely by "developing a methodology" without achieving any increase in participation. The revised goal is more concise and direct.]
Proposed System-Wide Primary Indicator: Enrollment of traditionally underserved populations by targeted populations **Metric for universities and colleges:** Number of recipients of total aid awarded annually in accordance with access and diversity plan goals. The reporting instrument is to be developed in coordination with the access and diversity plan reports.	**Response to metric:** 1. The populations identified in institutions' access and diversity plans do not provide a complete list of underserved populations which the System and its institutions seek to engage. Focusing solely on access and diversity plans needlessly narrows the goal. 2. The proposed metric would not count part-time enrollment, a status many people in underserved populations might have. 3. The number of students to whom an institution can award aid through its access and diversity plan depends on the total amount of aid the institution given as part of the Geier settlement. Because these amounts vary widely across System institutions, institutions given more total aid will be award aid to more recipients and so will perform better on the metric. 4. The number of recipients of total aid awarded annually is an indirect measure of participation. Why not use the more direct measure of System-wide headcount enrollment by students in underserved populations, whether or not they receive aid?
STUDENT SUCCESS PRIORITY	
Goal: The TBR System and its institutions will develop and implement programs and methodologies to enhance student persistence to the completion of the post-secondary credential or degree.	**Proposed clarification of goal:** The TBR System and its institutions will ~~develop and implement programs and methodologies to~~ enhance student persistence to the completion of the post-secondary credential or degree. [Explanation: As originally written, the goal could be met merely by "developing and implementing programs and methodologies" without any resulting change in completion rates.]

Priority, Goal and Metric	ETSU Response
Proposed System-Wide Primary Indicator: Progression rate, which measures both full time and part time enrolled students who either complete an award or enroll in the subsequent spring term. **Metric for universities and community colleges:** Fall to Fall progression rate	**Response to metric:** 1. The goal refers to persistence to degree completion (graduation rates), but the metric refers to progression rates. We are uncertain what the relationship is between the two. 2. The indicator refers to fall-to-spring progression, but the metric refers to fall-to-fall retention. 3. Will we track fall-to-fall retention past the customary first year to second year progression? 4. Will we track progress of both undergraduate and graduate students? 5. IPEDS tracks fall-to-fall retention of first-time, full-time freshman cohorts. If we track all students, full- and part-time—which we strongly support—will we be able to compare retention to our peers? 6. The metric refers to fall-to-fall progression (retention). How will we track progression of students entering in the spring term? 7. If we do not follow the freshman cohort, how will we account for students who drop out of college for a term or more, then return? 8. Will we attempt to track students who transfer to private colleges? 9. Will individuals seeking a second bachelor's degree count? If so, how will they be tracked? 10. What will count as "a post-secondary credential"? For example, in the area of teacher education, will (a) add-on endorsements which result in an additional teaching license and (b) transitional license candidates count? Neither receives a diploma, certificate, or degree unless a teaching license is considered a "certificate."
Goal: The TBR System and its institutions will increase the number of students who complete a post-secondary credential, including diplomas, certificates, undergraduate and graduate degrees.	**Proposed clarification of goal:** None. The goal is clear and concise.
Proposed System-Wide Primary Indicator: Number of students completing post-secondary credential annually **Metric for universities and community colleges:** THEC Report of Graduates extract	**Response to metric:** We strongly support using the number of graduates as a measure of student success.

Priority, Goal and Metric	ETSU Response
QUALITY PRIORITY	
Goal: The TBR system and its institutions will monitor and improve the effectiveness of their educational programs and delivery of services.	**Proposed clarification of goal:** The TBR system and its institutions will monitor and improve the effectiveness of their educational programs ~~and delivery of services~~. [Explanation: Neither of the indicators addresses delivery of services. Furthermore, quality of educational programs merits its own goal.]
Proposed system-wide primary indicator 1: Licensure and certification pass rates and student performance on national subject examinations **Metric for universities and community colleges:** Report extracted from Performance Funding data on national major field tests and licensure results	**Response to metric:** None. We note, however, that improvements in licensure and certification pass rates are likely to be small, because such tests are tied to accreditation in units in which they are given and these units already seek to achieve the highest possible rates.
Proposed system-wide primary indicator 2: Annual report on measures of the TBR General Education outcomes. **Metric for universities and community colleges only:** The General Education assessment rubric, which is currently under development	**Response to metric:** We support the metric, but note that improving performance on the learning outcomes in the general education assessment will not be easy, if history is any guide.
Goal: The TBR system and its institutions will monitor and improve the quality of their mission-specific research and creative activities and public service.	**Proposed clarification of goal:** None.
Proposed system-wide primary indicator: Number of third-party grants, contracts, agreements, and partnerships to advance research, creative activities, and/or public service in support of system and institutional missions. **Metric:** Annual report from each campus (template to be developed)	**Response to metric:** 1. The metric provides only an indirect measure of the quality of research and creative activity and public service. 2. The metric will underreport research and creative activity by focusing on disciplines in which external funding is available.
RESOURCEFULNESS AND EFFICIENCY PRIORITY	

Priority, Goal and Metric	ETSU Response
Goal: The TBR system and its institutions will address fiscal constraints through multiple approaches such as by being resourceful in the prudent management of resources, development of other sources of support, and the pursuit of entrepreneurial initiatives.	**Proposed clarification of goal: Goal:** The TBR system and its institutions will address fiscal constraints through ~~multiple~~ approaches such as ~~by being resourcefulness in~~ the prudent management of resources, development of other sources of support, and the pursuit of entrepreneurial initiatives. [Explanation: The goal would be triple-barreled were it not for the phrase "such as," which indicates that the approaches listed only illustrate those that might be pursued. However, see the first comment under response to metric.]
Proposed system-wide primary indicator: Total amount of funds raised through sources other than state appropriations and student tuition and fees **Metric:** Budget report	**Response to metric:** 1. Although the goal merely identifies some of the ways in which the System and its institutions might address fiscal constraints, the proposed metric focuses on only one approach. In practice, the metric would define the goal. 2. If we choose to report total funds raised, we would need to define carefully which funds apply. For instance, would athletic fundraising be included? 3. The metric does not take advantage of reports on fund-raising activities being reported to the Board by institutions' advancement offices.
Goal: The TBR system and its institutions will also address fiscal constraints through efficiency through such means as developing and adopting best practices, pursuing collaboration among institutions to achieve savings through elimination of unnecessary duplication and removing obstacles to competitiveness.	**Proposed clarification of goal:** The TBR system and its institutions will ~~also address fiscal constraints through~~ achieve greater efficiency through such means as ~~developing and adopting best practices,~~ pursuing collaboration among institutions to achieve savings through elimination of unnecessary duplication and removing obstacles to competitiveness. [Explanation: The revised goal is more concise; the phrase referring to best practices is too general to be useful.]
Proposed System-Wide Primary Indicator: Under consideration by the Resourcefulness & Efficiency sub-committee chaired by Dale Sims.	We observe that increasing collaboration and improving competitiveness can be incompatible aims.