

Biographical Sketch of Richard G. Rhoda

Dr. Richard G. Rhoda has dedicated his entire career to higher education in Tennessee. He joined the staff of the Tennessee Board of Regents as a graduate student in 1973. Over the next 12 years he assumed a progression of staff capacities, eventually becoming the executive assistant to the chancellor from 1980 to 1985. These were the formative years of the TBR system, which had been established in 1972. Dr. Rhoda contributed significantly to the development of initial system-wide policies and information systems. He served as the Regents' chief public information officer. It was during this period that he participated in chronicling the early history of Tennessee's community colleges, and pursued his academic research interests in higher education and public policy issues.

In 1985, Dr. Rhoda joined the administration of Tennessee State University, the State's 1890 Land-Grant institution. This was a period of significant change at TSU; a settlement had been reached in the statewide higher education desegregation lawsuit, with TSU as the centerpiece. Dr. Rhoda fulfilled a series of assignments at TSU, which included leading external relations, heading the university's downtown campus, launching the Institute of Government and recruiting the charter class of Ph.D. students, and serving as chief development officer.

Dr. Rhoda returned to the TBR staff in 1990 as vice chancellor for administration. While serving in this capacity he assumed a series of interim appointments. He was called upon to serve as the interim president of Nashville State Technical Institute during the 1991-92 academic year, where he was responsible for correcting severe fiscal and personnel issues at the institution. In 1993, upon the untimely death of the sitting Regents chancellor, Otis L. Floyd, Jr., Dr. Rhoda was named acting chancellor. In that assignment he carried out many of Dr. Floyd's initiatives and staffed the search for a permanent chancellor. In 1994, he served briefly as interim president of Austin Peay State University while fulfilling his role as vice chancellor.

Dr. Rhoda left public higher education in 1995 to join the faculty of Vanderbilt University. He was the original assistant director of the Peabody Center for Education Policy, which was created that year to be a national policy research center. He contributed to Center's charter research agenda, a significant part of which came to fruition with the establishment of the Consortium on Renewing Education. He also taught undergraduate and graduate courses.

In early 1997, Dr. Rhoda returned to the Tennessee Board of Regents as senior vice chancellor for academic affairs and strategic planning. Later that year, however, he was called upon to head the Tennessee Higher Education Commission. His immediate objectives as executive director were to resume the statutory work of the Commission, restore relationships with the General Assembly and State Administration, and improve accountability of the Commission within the higher education community. The

Commission now is recognized for its leadership in public policy and higher education policy analyses.

As executive director of THEC, Dr. Rhoda is a member of the University of Tennessee Board of Trustees, the Tennessee Board of Regents, the State (Tennessee) Board of Education, the Tennessee Student Assistance Corporation Board of Directors, the Board of Trustees of the Baccalaureate Education System Trust, and the Tennessee Foreign Language Institute Board of Directors.

He actively represents Tennessee in: the State Higher Education Executive Officers organization; the Education Commission of the States, serving on the steering committee; the Southern Regional Education Board; and The College Board, serving on the southern Regional Council. He is a member of the American Association of University Professors.

Dr. Rhoda was born in Allentown, Pennsylvania on June 14, 1950. He was educated in the public schools of Westfield, New Jersey and Suffern, New York. He earned the Bachelor of Arts in History from Vanderbilt University in Nashville, Tennessee (1972), the Master of Arts in Education from George Peabody College for Teachers in Nashville (1974), and the Ph.D. in Higher Education Administration from Vanderbilt University (1985). He is married to Nancy Chickering Rhoda, who recently retired as a career photojournalist with 'The Tennessean' newspaper. They have a daughter, Meredith, born in 1984, and a son, Nicholas, born in 1986.

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